the weekly Standard

AUGUST 7, 2006

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LEBANON VS. HEZBOLLAH
LEE SMITH

Mister Compassionate Conservative

TERRY EASTLAND on the presidential hopes of Kansas's Sam Brownback

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—Bruce P. Jackson

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—Partick S. Roberts

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Saddam's Man in Niger

A series of recent investigative articles in *Slate* by Christopher Hitchens has us wondering: Why *did* Wissam al-Zahawie, while ostensibly Saddam Hussein's ambassador to the Vatican, visit Niger on February 8, 1999?

It's a good question that is getting too little attention—which is to say, none, other than from Hitchens—in the American press. Here is a hint: Zahawie was "Iraq's top negotiator on nuclear weapons issues," according to former chief United Nations weapons inspector Rolf Ekeus. In that capacity, Zahawie represented Saddam Hussein's regime at the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference; he served as liaison between the Iraqi regime and the U.N. inspectors in Iraq in the 1990s; and he was a delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference in the 1980s.

A few additional facts: Niger was Iraq's chief supplier of uranium ore throughout the 1980s. Uranium has long been Niger's main (practically only) export. The Nigerien economy, according to a CIA report on the country, is built on "some of the world's largest uranium deposits."

Is it possible, then, that when Wissam al-Zahawie traveled to Niger in February 1999, he "didn't know that Niger produced uranium at all?" That seems, well, "unlikely," as Hitchens recently pointed out. But that is what Zahawie told *Time* magazine in October 2003.

It gets curiouser. Zahawie told *Time* that he was sent to Niger (and three other African countries) from his diplomatic posting at the Holy See in order to invite their leaders to visit Iraq as a protest against U.N. sanctions. "I took it to be a routine assignment," he said.

A routine mission, and yet according to that same *Time* account, Zahawie claims he "stopped in his tracks" when he heard President George W. Bush claim in his State of the Union speech on January 28, 2003, that Iraq had sought uranium from Africa. Zahawie was worried that Bush was talking about him.

It is an odd reaction for an Iraqi diplomat who had conducted what he claims was a routine mission to a poor African country, unaware that it was a major uranium exporter. No?

Or maybe he didn't really stop in his tracks at all. When Zahawie first told his story to a Western journalist, the Sunday *Independent*'s Raymond Whitaker in August 2003, he claimed that he had "thought no more about [his Niger trip] until February," two weeks after Bush's speech. "On 10 February I received an urgent call from the Iraqi embassy in Amman, informing me that the foreign ministry wanted me back in Baghdad as soon as possible." Zahawie says he was interviewed in Baghdad by the IAEA as part of their investigation into claims that Iraq had sought uranium from Niger to use in a nuclear weapons program. His name was reportedly on documents purporting to show an Iraq-Niger uranium deal that were later shown to be forgeries.

Two unanswered questions: Why exactly was Iraq's top nuclear negotiator in Niger in February 1999? And why has he made so many curious—and implausible—claims about his trip in the years since?

It is now clear that senior Iraqi officials had not one but two suspicious contacts with the Nigerien government. The first was Zahawie's trip in February 1999. The second was a meeting between Nigerien prime minister Ibrahim Mayaki and a man he would later identify as Iraq's minister of foreign affairs, Mohammad Saeed al-Sahaf. The Iraqi told his Nigerien counterpart that Saddam Hussein was interested in "expanding commercial relations" with Niger. Because Niger produces little other than uranium, Mayaki took the overture to mean that the Iraqis were seeking uranium from Niger.

It's no wonder that Britain's Butler Report called President Bush's State of the Union claim "well-founded." That claim, of course, was also at the heart of the liberal accusation that Bush "lied" us into the Iraq war. So it's no wonder, too, that Hitchens's digging into the Zahawie contradictions has been so diligently ignored. ♦

The Real Corliss Lamont

In our cover story on the Connecticut Democratic primary race between Sen. Joseph Lieberman and his challenger Ned Lamont ("Kiss of Death?" July 17), we referred in passing to the nutroots hero's "great-uncle, Corliss Lamont" as "an outspoken pacifist and Socialist." Our contributor Stephen Schwartz notes that this fails to give the old Stalinist his due. After all, he was "once called the man with the most Soviet affiliations in America." Lamont, indeed, was a defender of Stalin's purges. The *New York Times* reported in 1938 that "Corliss Lamont, chairman of the American Friends of the Soviet Union, charged yesterday that the [John] Dewey commission, which recently requested postponement of the current [purge] trial in Moscow, had 'abandoned even the pretense of impartiality.'" And here is a nice March 30, 1944, headline from the *Times*:

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"DEFENDS RUSSIA ON POLAND; Corliss Lamont Says Moscow Had Backing of Churchill." Our apologies to the memory of Corliss Lamont for describing him as a pacifist. ♦

On the Take in Long Branch

Readers may remember the eminent domain struggles in the town of Long Branch, New Jersey, chronicled in these pages by Jonathan V. Last several months ago ("Razing New Jersey," February 13, 2006). The city was working with the company Applied Development and using its eminent domain power to redevelop a 135-acre swath along the beachfront—razing middle-class neighborhoods in the process. One group of neighborhoods known as MTOTSA (Marine and Ocean terraces, and Seaview Avenue) took the town to court.

On June 22, New Jersey Superior Court judge Lawrence Lawson issued a 60-page opinion finding in favor of the city on all counts. For example, when residents produced a diagram of the city's plan, which showed that their neighborhood would be spared the bulldozers and not redeveloped into condos, the city explained that "drawings in the plan which may show infill, were and are for illustrative purposes only." That was good enough for Judge Lawson, who noted in his decision that since the MTOTSA neighborhood was included in the redevelopment plan in 1996, "absent a showing that it was improper at that time, the court must defer to the governing body's expertise and judgment," meaning that "the condemnees' current contention that the area is not in need of redevelopment is irrelevant." MTOTSA will appeal the decision.

There was more news from Long Branch on July 20, when the *Asbury Park Press* reported that city councilman John "Fazz" Zambrano "pleaded guilty to accepting a $1,000 bribe to help facilitate demolition contracts in the city." Zambrano accepted the bribe on November 19, 2003. Coincidentally, at a city council meeting in November 2003, council president Mary Jane Celli told MTOTSA residents, "It's not easy to lose your home, and we don't want anyone to think we don't have a heart, but we made a commitment to redevelopment in May 1996 and cannot go back on that now."

The *Asbury Park Press* further reports that Zambrano "had been negotiating his plea agreement during the course of the campaign" that culminated in his reelection on May 9. Zambrano's brother, Paul, was arrested last year for taking similar bribes in West Long Branch, where he was the former mayor.

Fazz Zambrano will be the second figure in the Long Branch redevelopment scheme to go to jail. The first was Applied Development president Joseph Barry, who was caught making more than $100,000 in payoffs to a neighboring county executive in North Jersey.

Oh, one last thing: Judge Lawson found there were no conflicts of interest present anywhere in the Long Branch redevelopment process. ♦

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Casual

$129 on the Dotted Line

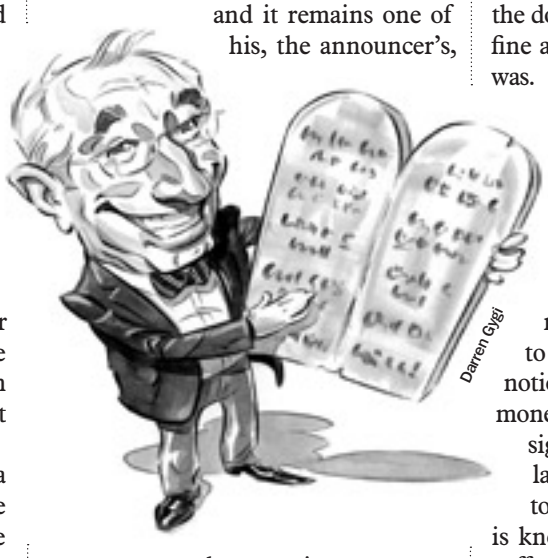
A friend told me he discovered on eBay that someone is selling my signature, asking the odd price of $129. The signature itself appears on a plain postcard containing a stamp with a picture of Rachel Carson. Not an eBayista myself, I have no way of knowing if the seller ever got anywhere near the sum asked. I do know that, at some point in the past, doubtless out of the usual scribbler's mad vanity, I must have agreed to sign an otherwise empty postcard for him or her.

The possibility that one's signature might be, even if only in someone's delusory mind, worth anything at all is amusing to contemplate. I wonder if this means that henceforth, when paying bills by check, I can notify the party I am paying that the reason my check is for $129 less than the actual bill is that the signature on the check is itself worth $129? Why do I feel this might not sail?

I have never understood the mania about autographs. The other day the *New York Times* ran a longish piece about a man whose specialty is collecting the autographs of secondary basketball stars from the past. People with more elevated tastes collect Founding Fathers or great poets. Selling autographs of the historically famous is a business. For myself, I cannot think of a single autograph that would thrill me. The same goes for original documents. The only original document I would care to own, now that I think of it, is the Ten Commandments, written in the hand of the Author.

Something talismanic, or magical, is thought to inhere in the autograph of a celebrated person. How else to explain the scandal of well-known athletes—some retired, some not—signing balls and other athletic goods for $10 and $20 and more a shot! They should be ashamed. After a fortunate and usually financially rewarding life playing games, they should be grateful that anyone would want their signatures and pleased to provide them gratis.

But the magical allure of the autograph is not restricted to Mencken's dear old Booboisie. The other day, on Chicago's classical music station, WFMT, I heard an otherwise sophisticated announcer say that Shostakovich signed one of his album covers for him and it remains one of his, the announcer's, most treasured possessions.



When I was a kid of 11 or 12, two friends of my father's ran a boxing gym in downtown Chicago; I would sometimes drop in when in the neighborhood. The two most famous fighters training there during those years were Tony Zale, then middleweight champion, and an excellent welterweight named Johnny Bratton. I had 8"x10" glossy photographs of both, but it wouldn't have occurred to me to ask either man to autograph his picture; besides, whenever I saw them, their hands were always taped. I was once introduced to Zale by one of my father's friends. "Kid," he said, "meet the middleweight champion of the world." "Hi, champ," I said. "Hi, kid," he replied. And our brilliant colloquy ended.

Around the time of grammar-school graduation at the Daniel Boone School, we all bought autograph books: small leather zip-around folders with colored paper inside on which friends signed their names. We used these books to write vacuous things to one another, some sentimental, some comic. "To a fine athlete and a great guy, Your friend, Marty Summerfield" is an example I remember from mine, maybe because it was Marty who was the finer athlete and greater guy. The smiley face had not yet been invented, but girls dotting the i's in their names with hearts was not uncommon. *Autres temps, même moeurs*. I lost the book decades ago. A pity, for I could have used it, when in the doldrums, to remind myself of how fine an athlete and great a guy I once was.

I am about to set off on a small tour to flog (a word I love, except for its faint suggestion of a dead horse in the background) a new book, on copies of which I shall be asked to sign my name. I shall do so delightedly, for I remain immensely pleased—not to say slightly astonished—at the notion of someone willing to pay cash money for my scribblings. Doing these signings has shown me the dissimilarity of my handwriting from day to day. As some people have what is known as bad-hair days, I seem to suffer bad handwriting days, when my writing is wriggly, shaky, looking as if it might have come right out of the Alzheimer's ward.

The copy of my signature on sale for $129, I notice from the picture shown of it on eBay, has clear enough letters but tends to slant slightly upward toward the end of my last name. Perhaps in the future I should charge for my signature based on the quality of that day's handwriting. If you care to inquire further about acquiring my signature, don't hesitate to write to me. Don't be surprised, though, if you get back a letter that reads "dictated but not signed by Joseph Epstein." At these prices, I really can't afford to be signing my own correspondence.

Joseph Epstein

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Sparring over Serbia

Stephen Schwartz's "Free at Last" (July 24) left me greatly surprised and somewhat disappointed, both by the distortion of historical and political facts and by the argumentation based on malicious and trivial political comments.

Describing Serbia as a "mafia state" is intentionally overlooking the well-known fact that the Milosevic regime met its end when the Serbian people, investing enormous effort and encountering the greatest possible risk, overthrew it in their bloodless revolution of October 2000. Serbian democratic authorities, in their crackdown on organized crime, and with the support of the United States, have established special courts that have already sentenced notorious leaders and members of criminal gangs and that have indicted war criminals. Since then Serbia has kept its democratic and reformist course through several elections, resulting in the victory of democratically oriented governments that have been consistently committed to bringing our nation toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

Serbian democratic leaders have been building friendly relations for the last six years with our neighbors, and the Montenegro referendum has shown how effortlessly the dissolution of the union of the two old European states was handled. The president of Serbia was the first head of state to visit Montenegro after the referendum, and he immediately extended congratulations and the hand of friendship. Unfortunately, Kosovo was addressed in a shallow and ignorant way. One should be aware that the exceptionally perilous circumstances of Serbs in Kosovo require exceptional provisions for their protection. So far, not enough has been done toward building inter-ethnic confidence. A negotiated outcome on their future status is the only sustainable solution, and one that would contribute to regional stability, democracy, and freedom.

Milosevic died in March 2006. For the Serbian people, he died in October 2000. Yet still some people find it hard to open their eyes to the Serbia of today. Instead, they keep playing with inadequate and biased historical symbolism while ignoring all the positive changes that have occurred. This does not contribute to

enlightened discussion, but rather to stereotyping and to shallow journalism.

Ambassador Ivan Vujacic
Embassy of Serbia
Washington, D.C.

Stephen Schwartz responds: Having been on the ground at the time of the bogus overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, I am aware that the butcher of the Balkans was replaced by "democrats" who were in no way superior to him. The latter members of the Belgrade polit-mafia included Zoran Djindjic, who was complicit in atrocities during the Milosevic aggression and was assassinated by his criminal cronies.

I am even more aware that Serbia will remain a de facto mafia state until it hands Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic over to the Hague tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. To describe Serbian conciliation to Montenegrin independence as progressive is good and accurate, but the course of Serbian internal and external politics since 2000 is not reformist, to say the least.

Faulty Toaster

Madeleine Albright's comments about our current North Korean policy are indeed outrageous, and The Scrapbook is quite right to refer to her own outlandish performance on that score as "Diplomatic Failure 101" (July 17).

But your photograph showing our former secretary of state clinking glasses with the despotic Kim Jong Il suggests that one really shouldn't be surprised at her diplomatic incompetence, for it seems that the Dear Leader, loathsome as he may be, knows how to hold a champagne glass while Madame Secretary does not.

Anthony Oberdorfer
Belmont, Mass.

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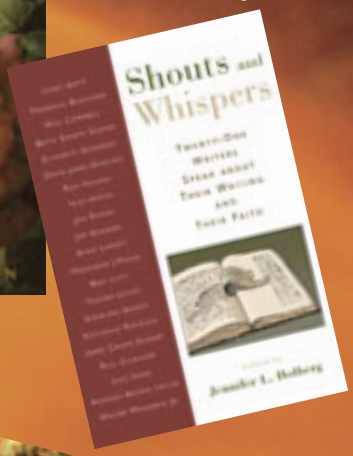

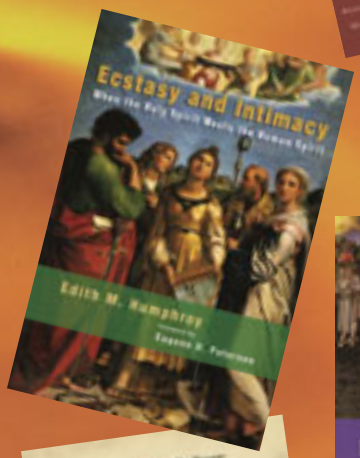

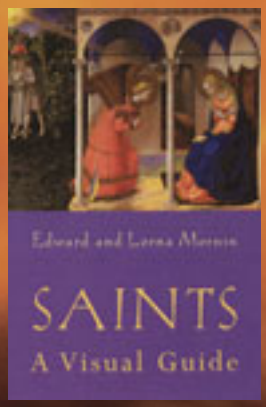

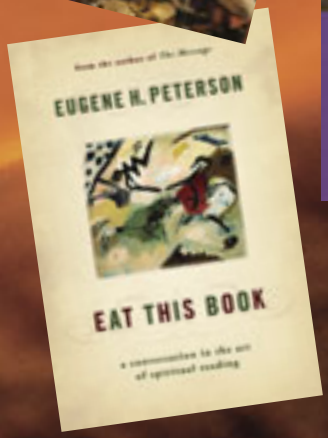

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the weekly Standard

Warren's Piece

Every time neocon warmongers like me get exasperated by the Bush administration (and we've had increasingly good reasons for exasperation in the last year or so, I might add), someone like first-term Clinton secretary of state Warren Christopher pops up. Maybe "pops up" isn't quite right, conveying as it does an implication of activity and even energy. So let's just say that Warren Christopher presented his credentials to the *Washington Post* op-ed page Friday, criticizing the Bush administration, more in sorrow than in anger. Bush, you see, had "resisted all suggestions that the first order of business should be negotiation of an immediate cease-fire between the warring parties," i.e., between the state of Israel and the terrorist group Hezbollah.

Christopher's piece needs to be read to be believed. It needs to be read as an example of the fatuousness of liberal elite opinion about the world we live in. That opinion is dominant in the Democratic party—and, unfortunately, has penetrated the Bush State Department more than one would wish. Still, Christopher's op-ed is such a convenient reminder of how much worse things could be that one wonders whether he's on Karl Rove's payroll.

He's probably not. After all, this is the man who, as secretary of state, allowed ethnic cleansing to go on far too long in the Balkans, presided over humiliations in Somalia and Haiti, did nothing in the face of genocide in Rwanda, didn't respond to terror at Khobar Towers, and allowed Hafez al-Assad to treat him as a supplicant. He's back, basically articulating the line of the non-Lieberman wing—that is, 95 percent—of the Democratic party.

What's his line? That "we should focus our efforts on stopping the killing." How? Three recommendations. First, "an immediate cease-fire must take priority, with negotiations on longer-term arrangements to follow." In other words, the fact that one of the warring parties is a state that had withdrawn from occupied territory and was scrupulously complying with its obligations, and the other is a terror group that was arming itself to the teeth and killing and kidnapping citizens of a neighboring country, is irrelevant. And the notion that a terror group should be in any way disadvantaged by the "longer-term arrangements to follow," that the terrorists should pay any price for their actions, is nowhere suggested by Christopher. Indeed, he is so much the Compleat Diplomat that he never mentions the incident that caused the outbreak of hostilities: Hezbollah's attack across the Israel-Lebanon border.

Second: "If a cease-fire is the goal, the United States has an indispensable role to play." The highlighting of U.S. indispensability is a (moderately clever) way of disguising the fact that Christopher wants the United States to yield in its view of the Middle East conflict to the Europeans and the United Nations. What does U.S. indispensability mean to Warren Christopher? That only we can muscle the Israelis into an agreement, and that "the Europeans are unlikely to participate in a multinational enforcement action until the United States commits to putting its own troops on the ground." In other words, what is indispensable is not a distinctively American view of the situation or the exercise of American leadership. It is helping the international community to impose an evenhanded settlement on Israel and Hezbollah.

Third: The United States has to engage in "direct dialogue" with Syria, since Syria has "more leverage over Hezbollah's actions than any other country save Iran." And what about Iran? Christopher leaves unsaid what would undoubtedly be his recommendation: direct engagement without conditions with that regime as well. He does write, "as the situations with North Korea and Iran confirm, refusing to speak with those we dislike is a recipe for frustration and failure." It would, I suppose, be undiplomatic to mention North Korea's missile launches and Iran's nuclear weapons program. They just happen to be nations "we dislike."

In Warren Christopher's world, we should dislike fewer regimes. Then, presumably, we'd be disliked less. Israel, however, we should dislike. After all, "every day America gives the green light to further Israeli violence, our already tattered reputation sinks even lower." This isn't even evenhandedness. Nowhere in his op-ed is Christopher as harsh about Hezbollah—or Syria or Iran—as he is about Israel. Israeli violence is the problem. Anti-Israeli policies are the solution. Warren Christopher, meet Kofi Annan.

The Bush administration has wavered and floundered too much over the last year. Its State Department remains in some considerable denial about Iran, and its Defense Department about Iraq. We look forward to resuming our constructive criticisms of the administration. But we pause this week to say this: Given the spirit of today's liberal establishment and Democratic party, so perfectly personified by Warren Christopher, thank God we have a Bush and not a Kerry administration.

—*William Kristol*

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Rumors of War

Hezbollah is losing friends and influence at home.

BY LEE SMITH

Damascus

THE LEBANESE MEDIA are the best in the Arab Middle East, and perhaps the freest, not because of any noble principles but because they are so competitive. Every Lebanese media outlet represents a political interest, sometimes several political interests, and all the major political parties own TV stations. (In this regard, Hezbollah really is just like every other political party, though no one else does "martyr kitsch" like the Party of God.) And the people of Lebanon take their cue from the media. Insofar as rumors are also a medium, they, too, represent political interests. My friend Fawaz called last week from Lebanon with reports of a rumor.

"There are lots of stories going around Beirut that Hezbollah M.P. Mohammed Raad is dead," says Fawaz. "And get this—more than 500 Hezbollah fighters have been killed and are lying around area hospitals. That's a lot of virgins on call."

Whether or not such rumors are true, they indicate something about the state of affairs right now in Lebanon. There are many Lebanese imagining, fantasizing, hoping against hope that Hezbollah will be wiped from the face of the earth. Some are even joking about it.

"The new one," Fawaz says, "is that they're going to play the next World Cup in the Daheyh [the Shiite neighborhood]—the whole thing's been leveled nice and flat."

Lee Smith, a Hudson Institute visiting fellow based in Beirut, is writing a book on Arab culture.

This narrative, including the morbid jokes at the expense of the heavily Shiite southern suburbs and the spectacular number of Hezbollah dead, runs against the current Western news narrative. It seems that U.S. and Western press outfits are determined to claim that the Israelis have driven all of Lebanon, Shiite or not, Islamist or not, pro-Hezbollah or not, into the waiting arms of the Islamic resistance. It is not clear why Western journalists believe this is so, though it seems to comport nicely with the idea that the Israelis are killing too many civilians—a cynical storyline, given that the Israelis are fighting against a militia and without the benefit of weapons capable of targeting only the bad guys.

And it is not just the press that believes what it finds convenient to believe. In his press conference with Tony Blair on July 28, President Bush maintained that Lebanese prime minister Fouad Siniora's government must be preserved—even though that government still includes Hezbollah. Indeed, insofar as Hassan Nasrallah singlehandedly took Lebanon to war, he is the de facto head of the Lebanese government. Washington should side instead with what you might call, for lack of a better term, the Lebanese government in exile in Beirut—moderate Sunnis, Christians, Druze, and a few Shia who would seem promising candidates to run their country after the war is over, except for the fact that they were incapable of keeping their country out of the war to begin with.

The White House says it wants to save the anti-Syria forces of the Cedar Revolution; however, the problem is no longer a strong Syria but a weak Lebanon. "How will the citizens of Lebanon deal with this heartbreak and shame," says Fawaz, "that their own leaders betrayed their country for 15 years under Syrian tutelage?"

The fact is that many Lebanese do not think that Siniora's government is worth much in this context. After all, Siniora is a Sunni, and all the Lebanese except for the Sunnis—Christians, Druze, and Shiites—believe that the Sunnis are cowards. Coastal Sunnis are merchants, and they do not fight, ever. They have proved incapable of disarming Hezbollah on their own. Moreover, like the Shiite militia that is now fighting to destroy Israel, Lebanon's Sunnis were raised from birth with the idea that Zionism is a historic crime. Even if these moderate Sunnis in favor with the White House wanted to do so, they could not conceivably take on a resistance group that seeks to liberate Jerusalem. It goes against everything they have been brought up to believe.

Even now, three weeks after it has been proven beyond a doubt that Hezbollah's arms are incapable of protecting one inch of Lebanese soil from the Zionists, there are still many Lebanese, including in the government, who credit Hezbollah with having driven Israeli forces from southern Lebanon in 2000. And thus the seeds of Lebanon's current crisis were sown in that willing self-deception of six years ago. The Lebanese could not then discern that Israeli politics all but forced then-Prime Minister Ehud Barak to withdraw from the South; nor could they imagine how the voting citizens of a liberal democracy would later compel its leadership to protect them at any cost. And if the Lebanese thought that an Islamist militia had beaten back the region's most powerful military, then they could hardly forecast, in spite of repeated warnings, that that "resistance" would end up reducing parts of their country to a soccer field. ♦

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Going on Offense for Missile Defense

Defending ourselves has never made more sense.

BY FRED BARNES

SENATOR CARL LEVIN of Michigan had a grim and unhappy look on his face. For years, he had led Democrats in an effort to slash funding for missile defense. He had planned to seek a cut of $68 million. But with North Korea poised to launch missiles and Iran's relentless drive to go nuclear, the situation had changed. So much so that Senator Jeff Sessions of Alabama proposed to boost spending on the missile defense program, now more than two decades old, by an extra $45 million. Even Levin voted yes as it passed 98-0 in late June.

There are two lessons here. One is that Democrats, having kept spending for missile defense at anemic levels during the Clinton years, and having sought to block deployment of an effective system under President Bush, are vulnerable on the issue. And this is an election year in which Republicans, embattled and minimally popular, need every issue they can find. The other lesson is that an election campaign, with the American people paying attention, is the perfect time to debate missile defense and generate national support for a system on land, at sea, and in space. At the least, Democrats would be put on the defensive.

There's no doubt about either the popularity of missile defense or the urgency in deploying a full-blown system to protect America. In a 2004 poll by Princeton Survey Research, 62 percent approved of President Bush's plan to build a missile defense system. A year earlier, in a Gallup Poll, 61 percent said they would be "upset" if money were not being spent on such a system. And in a survey last year sponsored by a pro-missile defense group, 79 percent voiced support for missile defense and 70 percent said it is an "important part" of homeland security.

The need for an antimissile shield was underscored this summer not only by North Korea's missile tests and Iran's race to build nuclear weapons, but by the potential emergence of a worldwide threat. North Korea is believed to have a small nuclear arsenal and is an exporter of weapons. Iran, the world's leading sponsor of terrorists, is developing long-range missiles as well as nukes. If it produces a nuclear weapon, other Middle Eastern nations are likely to follow. Pakistan, an Islamic country with a fragile pro-West government, plans to build more nuclear weapons. And the United States would have no defense in the unlikely event that China or Russia, onetime enemies, unleashed a missile attack.

Bush boldly cleared the way for deploying a missile defense system by withdrawing, in December 2001, from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty with Russia. A year later, he ordered Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld "to proceed with fielding an initial set of missile defense capabilities" by 2004 or 2005. These, the president said, "will include ground-based interceptors, sea-based interceptors, additional Patriot (PAC-3) units, and sensors based on land, at sea, and in space."

In 2004, a handful of antimissile missiles were deployed in Alaska. And six Navy ships have been equipped to bring down missiles. The head of the missile defense program at the Pentagon, Lieutenant General Henry Obering, insists these systems would have been able to destroy the one long-range missile fired by the North Koreans on July 4. That missile failed and fell in to the Sea of Japan.

But Obering is only guessing. And the widely held view in the defense community is that the deployment of anti-missile assets by the United States is not keeping pace with the growing missile threat. The war in Iraq, for one thing, has forced serious cuts in funding for missile defense. Planned deployments were delayed and the number of actual antimissile units was reduced. This year, House *Republicans* have sought to cut spending further.

There's a compelling case for reengaging missile defense as a top priority of the Bush administration. A comprehensive upgrading of the ship-based Aegis system, which has been successful in eight out of nine tests, makes enormous sense, as ships can be deployed off the Korean coast and near Iran. Expanding the number of antimissile ships would be the fastest way to get near-global coverage at the least cost. Destroyers could probably be equipped for $100 million or less.

For many Americans, ground-based interceptors are the heart of missile defense. But these interceptors have not performed as well in tests as the ship-based ones. The next ground-based test will be crucial in gaining congressional support for missile defense in general.

But the future of missile defense is in space. And Senator John Kyl of Arizona, the savviest advocate of missile defense, is ready to lead an effort next year in Congress to add this strategic element. It would have global reach and not depend, for instance, on where a ship was deployed.

Critics claim this would bring about the militarization of space, but their argument is specious. Space is already militarized. Intercontinental missiles, such as the one North Korea tested, travel through space. Military satellites are already in space.

The midterm election on November 7 will play a critical role in the advancement of missile defense. If

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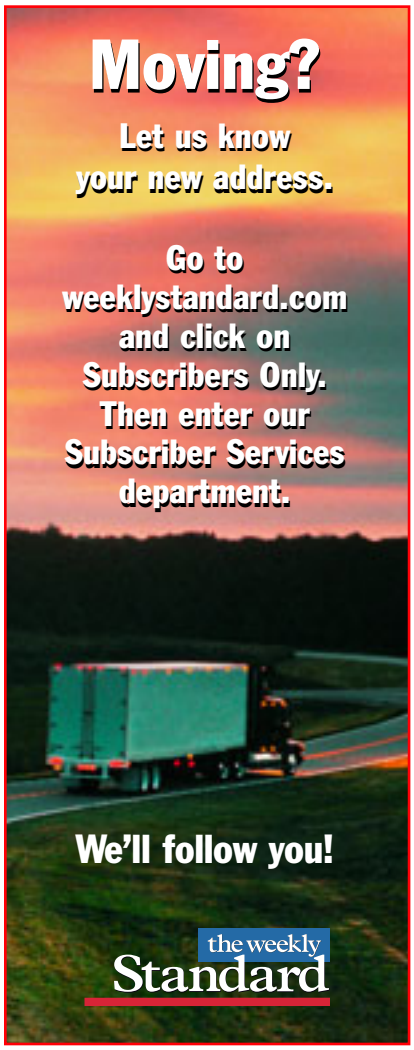
Democrats capture either the House or Senate, funding may be dangerously curtailed and deployments postponed. Kyl says Democrats favor a policy of "test forever, deploy never." Democrats have voted to cut spending nine times in the past five years. When they controlled Congress, they slashed billions from missile defense.

To avert this, missile defense must become a major issue in the campaign, addressed by Republican candidates and, especially, the president. The issue can be laid out very simply: We need robust missile defense for the safety of America; Democrats are standing in the way; vote Republican. Under pressure, Democrats might cave and endorse a vigorous missile defense program. But, given their record, don't hold your breath. ♦



The Hezbollah Surprise

What we have here is a failure of intelligence.

BY DAN DARLING

WITH ALL THE DISCUSSION, analysis, commentary, and recrimination that has surrounded U.S. intelligence failures in Iraq, it is surprising that so few parallels have been drawn to the situation in Lebanon. As in the case of Iraq, it appears there was an intelligence failure of some magnitude. This time, to be sure, it was an underestimate of the size and quality of the enemy's arsenal. But the sophistication of Hezbollah's Iranian-built missiles, stockpiled since the 2000 Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, appears to have "caught the United States and Israel off guard," the *New York Times* reports, "and officials in both countries are just now learning the extent to which the militant group has succeeded in getting weapons from Iran and Syria."

From the Iranian variants of the Chinese Silkworm missile to more conventional Syrian-made warheads—innovatively filled with ball bearings so as to maximize damage to humans and property—Hezbollah's rockets have proved more formidable than expected. Moreover, combat between Hezbollah and Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) in southern Lebanon has revealed the degree to which the terrorist organization improved the abilities of its irregular troops—to the point where the reported casualty ratios released by the Israeli government and various media outlets suggest that Hezbollah's fighters are more capable than the vast majority of conventional Arab armies.

Hezbollah owes all these improvements to generous support from Syria and Iran. What does it say about the state of Western intelligence that these nations were able to provide such support, including sophisticated missiles and training, without our knowledge?

One thing it points to is a pattern of intelligence failures—or of an intrinsic inability of the intelligence community to perform at the level policymakers expect. In the post-Cold War era alone, numerous examples can be cited, including the failure to predict the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the advanced status of the Iraqi nuclear program at the time of that invasion, the successes of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs, the extent of Libya's weapons of mass destruction programs, the activities of the Abdul Qadeer Khan proliferation network, and so on. In light of this history, the overestimation of Iraq's WMD program at the time of the 2003 U.S. invasion stands out as an unusual exception to the recent rule, which has been one of underestimating our opponents. Indeed, as more information has become available regarding the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, it appears increasingly clear that both are further along than U.S. intelligence initially assessed them to be.

If there is one productive development from the fighting in Lebanon, it would be the insight it has given us into the views of the Iranian leadership on a number of topics, ranging from terrorism to their willingness to deliver sophisticated weaponry to nonstate actors. And all of it appears to add up to a disturbing portrait that the United States and its allies will need to factor into their calculations of how to deal with Iran.

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With regard to terrorism, Iran appears quite willing to use Hezbollah as its proxy, continuing to support the group with advanced weapons, training, and some unknown number of Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps personnel from the elite Qods Force unit. All of this suggests that the Iranian leadership has embraced revolutionary hostility toward Israel.

However the Iranian regime regards its economic and political ties with European governments, it appears that these ties are of no consequence when it comes to persuading the Tehran regime to end its support of one of the world's most infamous terrorist groups. Indeed, Iran appears to have boosted rather than cut back its support for Hezbollah in recent years. It's hard, therefore, to see a rational basis on which engagement with Iran can be expected to deter it from employing terrorism as a tool of statecraft, particularly if the Islamic Republic suffers no consequences from its role in the current fighting in Lebanon.

AP Photo / Bassem Tellawi

Syrian demonstrators with the Hezbollah banner

This is not an abstract consideration, given Iran's continued role in issues directly related to U.S. national security. For instance, as recently as June 23, the *Washington Post* quoted General George Casey, commander of the allied forces in Iraq, as saying, "We are quite confident that the Iranians, through their covert special operations forces, are providing weapons, IED [Improvised Explosive Device] technology, and training to Shia extremist groups in Iraq, the training being conducted in Iran and in some cases probably in Lebanon through their surrogates." Casey went on to say that the Iranians were "using surrogates to conduct terrorist operations in Iraq, both against us and against the Iraqi people." The extremist groups referred to by Casey are, among others, Moktada al-Sadr and his Mahdi army, members of which have cut a bloody swath of sectarian violence through Baghdad in recent weeks.

Likewise, *National Journal* recently reported that "U.S. officials have openly accused Iran of offering safe harbor to top al Qaeda officials who escaped the U.S. dragnet in neighboring Afghanistan"—among them the organization's de facto ministers of war and propaganda. *National Journal* quoted the former head of the CIA's Osama bin Laden unit as saying "there is no denying that Tehran allowed al Qaeda fighters to transit its territory and offered them occasional sanctuary for R&R. . . . It's a reminder that the Iranians have always been very clever in determining exactly what level of terrorist support they can blithely engage in without putting themselves in our bull's-eye."

Supporting Shiite extremist groups in Iraq and harboring key members of the surviving al Qaeda leadership is alarming enough. But the ease with which Iran has been able to amplify the capabilities of Hezbollah without drawing the attention of Western intelligence agencies means one must wonder whether Iran is engaged in even more alarming activities both in Iraq and with regard to al Qaeda. How would we know?

Similarly, Iran's willingness to provide sophisticated missile technology to Hezbollah belies the common argument among both diplomats and intelligence officials that the regime considers such weapons too valuable to hand out to proxy groups. According to the *New York Times*, "Western intelligence services did not know that Iran had managed to ship C-802 missiles to Hezbollah." (The C-802 is the sophisticated Chinese antiship missile used by Hezbollah in its attack on an Israeli warship on July 14.)

If Iran is willing to transfer such weaponry to Hezbollah, where does it draw the line? Would it one day do the same with a nuclear warhead? For that matter, what about its existing chemical and biological weapons stockpiles? Such a scenario may seem alarmist, but given the intelligence failures that have occurred to date with regard to Hezbollah's arsenal, can anyone in the intelligence community offer believable assurances that this will not occur? Or that we would be aware of such transfers before it was too late?

Ultimately, one lesson policymakers should draw from the fighting in Lebanon is that they will never have the degree of certainty about intelligence that they would like. There will always be what Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld termed "known unknowns," i.e., those things that we know that we don't know with regard to the capabilities of our enemies. Another lesson is that if we prepare for the worst, the surprises we encounter are more likely to be pleasant. ♦

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Shut Up, They Explained

The ABA's latest anti-Bush strike.

BY EDWARD WHELAN

CAPTURED for the past two decades by the left, the American Bar Association leverages its clout as a professional services group for lawyers in support of an array of liberal causes. Its special task force on presidential signing statements—which last week accused President Bush of undermining the rule of law and the separation of powers—provides a revealing case study of the politicization of the ABA.

Presidents as far back as Andrew Jackson in 1830 have used signing statements "to raise and address the legal or constitutional questions they believed were presented by the legislation they were signing." That's what Walter Dellinger, the liberal law professor who was appointed by President Clinton to head the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, explained in a 1993 OLC opinion. Such statements, Dellinger concluded, are an entirely proper means of resolving the dilemma a president faces when a bill that he regards as desirable also contains one or more provisions that he believes to be unconstitutional or suspect. Dellinger rejected an alternative view—that the president's duty in such instances is to veto the bill.

In early June, left-wing ABA president Michael Greco declared that President Bush's "practice of attaching signing statements to laws squarely presents a constitutional issue about the separation of powers among the three branches." Greco announced the creation of a "nonpartisan" task force to examine the issue—and promptly stacked it with fervent opponents of President Bush, including three Republicans who had already criticized President Bush's use of signing statements. Notably, Greco did not invite Dellinger (or any of his OLC attorneys now in academia) to take part. Greco also lambasted President Bush for "acting like a king."

The substance of the constitutional positions that President Bush has taken in his signing statements is a fair matter for debate, and it would have been no surprise if the rigged task force had vigorously contested some of those positions. But instead, in what Dellinger described to me in an email as a "fundamental misdiagnosis," the task force adopted an extremist and highly idiosyncratic stance absolutely opposing a president's use of signing statements to state his constitutional objections to provisions in laws that he is signing. According to the task force, a president's constitutional obligation is to veto any bill that has any provision he believes is unconstitutional.

That position is wrong and unworkable. The task force imagines that the president's constitutional duty to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed" requires him to enforce provisions of a law that he regards as unconstitutional—"unless and until they are held unconstitutional by the Supreme Court or a subordinate tribunal." But the Constitution is first among the "Laws" that the president "shall take Care . . . be faithfully executed." An unconstitutional provision of a legislative enactment is void, and it is the president's duty not to enforce provisions that he regards as unconstitutional. (How he ought to form that judgment is a separate question.) It is therefore entirely proper for a president to sign a bill that has some provisions that are constitutional and others that aren't, for the latter (and any other provisions inseverable from them) should be regarded as though they didn't exist.

Indeed, the operations of the federal government depend on a president's acceptance of this practice. The task force posits the "rare possibility" that a president might think it necessary to sign legislation that contains an unconstitutional provision, but it also contends that use of a signing statement is unacceptable even in such a case. Yet such instances are common, not rare. Virtually every appropriations bill, for example, contains a legislative-veto provision—which typically purports to confer on a single house of Congress, or even a single committee, the power to nullify executive-branch action—notwithstanding the fact that the Supreme Court recognized that mechanism to be unconstitutional more than 20 years ago.

There is little reason to believe (and the task force does not argue) that if the president were required to veto any bill with an unconstitutional provision, Congress would stop inserting unconstitutional provisions. It is at least as likely that members of Congress would gamble that inserting such provisions would increase their negotiating leverage, or that they would use such provisions as poison pills for bills they disfavor. In any event, there is plenty of room for the president and Congress to have reasonable disagreements whether certain provisions are unconstitutional. A healthy understanding of separation of powers would recognize that each branch should display a particular concern for its own prerogatives.

The deeper flaw in the task force's approach is its hyperinflated version of the myth of judicial supremacy. In the ABA's view, the president is compelled to implement an unconstitutional provision "unless and until" some magistrate somewhere strikes

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down the provision. The task force misreads *Marbury* v. *Madison* as meaning that the judicial branch enjoys a monopoly on constitutional interpretation. But *Marbury* means only that judges, in exercising their role of deciding cases, may determine whether statutes they are applying comport with the Constitution. Nothing in *Marbury* remotely suggests that the president, in exercising his separate role of enforcing the laws, should not make a similar determination.

Indeed, the Constitution provides that the president shall swear to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution"—not simply to administer statutory law. Thus, when properly exercised, a president's use of signing statements to identify constitutional defects in bills that he signs is a vindication, not a violation, of separation-of-powers principles.

The task force's mistake rests more broadly on the conceit that because the president is inherently "partisan and interested" and the judiciary is "independent and impartial," the judiciary should therefore reign supreme over the president. That the president is elected and accountable and swears to uphold the Constitution, that life-tenured judges have amply demonstrated a penchant for overstepping their bounds in pursuit of ideological agendas, and that the Constitution creates a system of coequal branches operating in different realms evidently eluded the task force.

The ABA's report is, at every level, a shoddy piece of work—poorly reasoned, sloppily written, and displaying a pervasive misunderstanding of how the American constitutional scheme does, and should, work. Critics of the Bush administration should be particularly unhappy with the ABA. First, the members of the task force neglected an opportunity to address the substantive positions in President Bush's signing statements. They appear foolish when they blindly attack the form in which those positions are set forth.

Second, Greco's focus on signing statements is myopic. President Bush is charged with administering not only the laws he signs, but also all the laws that continue in effect from before he took office (as well as any that might be enacted in an override of his veto). Moreover, his duty to interpret the laws he signs is ongoing and is not limited to the occasion of the signing statement or constrained by it. Indeed, President Bush could have chosen to issue no signing statements and instead have quietly adopted exactly the same positions in implementing the laws. Would Greco really have preferred that approach?

It is a sorry testament to the state of legal academia today that prominent academics on the task force—including Yale Law School dean Harold Koh, Harvard law professor Charles Ogletree, and Stanford law professor Kathleen Sullivan—would sign off on such a report. Either these academics actually agree with the report or, though disagreeing (or perhaps not having read it with any care), they are willing nonetheless to lend their names and reputations to it. Neither explanation does them any credit. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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Forty Years of Feminism

Nag, nag, nag.

BY ALLISON KASIC

AP Photo / Jim McKnight

Greta J. Edwards, a former NOW national board member, in Albany last week

Albany

LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES into the opening ceremony of the National Organization for Women's 40th Anniversary Conference here, New York state NOW president Marcia Pappas announces that we are present at a "herstoric event." They really do talk like that.

NOW, of course, is the nation's largest feminist organization. Founded in 1966, it reached the apex of its visibility and influence in the late 1970s and early '80s, when it went all out for the Equal Rights Amendment—and lost to Phyllis Schlafly's conservative legions. Today, weakened and marginalized, it staggers on, attempting to recapture the old fire. But the anniversary conference, held July 21-23, has attracted just 712 participants, a mere 0.1 percent of the over 500,000 contributing members NOW's website claims.

(Not that the group's official figures are necessarily reliable. At two different sessions here, Muriel Fox, a NOW founder and longtime communications guru, admitted that she fudged the early numbers: She didn't want the press to know how small NOW really was, so she'd heavily inflate the membership and number of chapters in her press releases. Sometimes she'd brush off queries with a breezy claim of "millions" of chapters.)

The whole gathering, moreover, has a distinctly retro air. Everyone I talk to seems to be a sixtysomething women's studies professor or a fiftysomething social worker named Fran. The T-shirts in evidence everywhere say things like "Doing My Part to Piss Off the Religious Right," "Born-Again Pagan," and "Thelma and Louise Finishing School" (remember the 1991 movie about the housewife and coffee shop waitress who kill an attempted rapist, then take off on the lam, and on a crime spree, in a 1966 convertible?).

The highest-ranking politician to address the conference is New York Democratic congresswoman Carolyn Maloney—a true "shero," according to NOW president Kim Gandy. And the biggest celebrity, received with much excitement, is Tyne Daly, who played Lacey on *Cagney and Lacey*, a show that's been off the air for nearly twenty years.

Where are the Hollywood starlets who line up to perform in the *Vagina Monologues* or stump for Hillary Clinton? For that matter, where is Hillary Clinton? Senator Clinton, after all, is the first serious female presidential contender in history, and the conference is in her home state at a time when she's up for reelection, yet her name is hardly mentioned.

Many of the breakout sessions, which make up most of the conference, are devoted to policy issues—education, abortion, immigration, and so on. But the presenters are usually NOW employees or NOW chapter chairs, either unqualified to speak on their given issues or vastly unprepared (like the discussion leader who informs us she'll be speaking "off the cuff"). The workshop titles display the trademark radical-feminist crudeness ("It's My Cleavage so Sue Me! Fashion and Feminism"), tedium ("Immigration is a Feminist Issue"), and overkill ("The War on Contraception"), not to say delusion ("Educational Equality Under Attack! Learn How to

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Protect Your Rights").

Instead of delving into policy analysis, the workshops emphasize emotion, through small-group conversation and "pair-share" exercises. The conference guidelines encourage attendees to "speak in 'I' terms, e.g., 'I think . . . ,' 'I feel . . . ,' and 'I believe . . . .'" Ideas, as a result, are few and far between.

For the most part, what the participants feel like doing is reliving past glories. The favorite subject is the Equal Rights Amendment, which went down to defeat in 1982. Speakers from Tyne Daly to a screaming Eleanor Smeal (twice president of NOW, in 1977-'82 and 1985-'87) call for the return of the ERA, to rabid applause from an audience that includes many veterans of the fight a quarter-century ago. Even at the Youth Feminist Summit on the first day of the conference, it's the old guard that dominates the podium and the floor.

In addition to the talk, there is genuine celebration. Feminist folk artist Sandy Rapp ("Dylanesque," according to the program) provides musical entertainment at the birthday party on Saturday night. This evolves into a giant sing-along complete with clapping, dancing, and chanting lyrics like "Get your laws off me / I'm not your property" and the catchy refrain "We were marching with Molly Yard" (president of NOW from 1987-'91). For one brief, shining moment, the revolution lives.

But fewer than half of the attendees stick around to close out the conference, and virtually none under the age of forty are visible in its last hours. In a twist straight out of a bad Lifetime coming-of-age drama, the radio on the shuttle back to the airport is blasting Jennifer Warnes and Bill Medley's *Dirty Dancing* theme song, "(I've Had) The Time of My Life"—a sentiment about as true to life for this attendee as Eleanor Smeal's impassioned proclamation to the sisterhood, still ringing in my ears: "The best is yet to come!" ♦

Is Young Kean Able?

The son of the state's most popular GOP pol goes after New Jersey's Senate seat. BY DUNCAN CURRIE

Lakewood, New Jersey

HOW BAD is voter apathy in New Jersey? Consider two numbers. In a statewide poll released on July 20, some 64 percent of those surveyed could not name *either* of the two Senate candidates who will be on the ballot in November. Only 23 percent could name both: incumbent Democrat Bob Menendez and Republican challenger Tom Kean Jr. "Isn't that stunning?" asks a Kean aide.

Maybe in a normal state. But not in the swamp of cynicism that is New Jersey, which today rivals even Louisiana in its reputation for sleaze. Jim McGreevey, the infamous "gay American" and disgraced former governor, was just the most salacious example of a Jersey tradition: politicians leaving office a few steps ahead of the sheriff. In recent years there was the Camden mayor who went to jail; the Irvington mayor who went to jail; the Hainesport mayor who went to jail; the Asbury Park mayor who went to jail; the Hoboken mayor who went to jail; the Atlantic City mayor who . . . you get the picture.

In a state where bribery seems embedded in the political culture, fighting "corruption" makes for a good soundbite. But does it play well at the polls? Tom Kean Jr., a state senator from Westfield, hopes so. His stump speech includes a clarion call for ethics reform and a blistering attack on Senator Menendez, whom Kean paints as a "Hudson County party boss." (For non-Garden Staters: Hudson County is to graft what Sonoma County is to wine.) At times his spiel sounds like boilerplate. But Kean is also an ardent supporter of the Bush tax cuts and a noisy critic of New Jersey's "out-of-control tax policies."

Those are his twin themes—ethics and taxes—and they're more interwoven than you might think. "People know that corruption costs them more in the taxes they pay," says Kean. (One example: In December 2004, acting governor Richard Codey announced that McGreevey's legal foibles near the end of his tenure had set back New Jersey taxpayers almost $159,000.)

In general, Democrats take the tax spat seriously but scoff at Kean's assault on corruption. "The ethics thing doesn't fly," says Bob Smith, a veteran Democratic state senator. He notes that Republican Doug Forrester made corruption a signature issue in the 2005 governor's race and lost by 10 points. But Republicans believe they can cast Menendez as an avatar of dirty machine-style politics in Hudson County. They also point to some dubious friends, including his old law partner, a convicted cocaine trafficker named Manny Diaz, and his campaign finance chairman, Joseph Simunovich, who is now under a state ethics probe.

Menendez aides claim Kean is trying to "Swift Boat" their man with smear tactics. They rail against a movie, still in production, about Menendez's service under former Union City mayor William Musto, who went to prison in 1982 for racketeering. Menendez testified against his old boss and has (justifiably) worn that as a badge of honor. The film apparently tells a different story. When the *New York Times* first reported this in May, writer Josh Benson

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compared the project to *Stolen Honor*, the 2004 movie that raised questions about John Kerry's Vietnam heroism.

A Kean aide admits there is "a project in development," which the campaign is funding. "Literally hundreds of people have come forward with stories about Bob Menendez," says the aide. But the movie might never be completed or released. It is still just one potential "option" for highlighting the Menendez record.

In Congress that record has been reliably liberal and partisan, save for Cuba policy. (Menendez, 52, is the son of Cuban immigrants.) Before entering the Senate in January 2006—to fill the seat vacated by Democratic governor Jon Corzine—Menendez served for 13 years in the House. On the campaign trail he touts his opposition to the Iraq war and disparages Kean as a "Bush Republican." Running against Bush is the Democratic strategy *du jour* for 2006, but it makes particular sense in New Jersey, where the president tends to be even more unpopular than he is nationwide.

Of course, Kean is hardly a "Bush Republican." He is decidedly more liberal on social issues, favoring abortion rights and federal funding of embryonic stem cell research while eschewing the Federal Marriage Amendment. He also breaks with Bush on Social Security reform and oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Kean does, however, robustly defend the Bush tax cuts, and says he would have voted to confirm Supreme Court Justices John Roberts and Samuel Alito. On Iraq, he insists the decision to topple Saddam Hussein was correct and rejects an "artificial timeline" for withdrawal. Menendez, by contrast, was one of only 13 senators who voted for the (failed) Kerry amendment, which set July 2007 as the deadline for "redeployment" of U.S. troops.

If the Iraq war hurts Kean—and it does—the tax issue helps him. New Jersey already shoulders one of the most draconian burdens in the country, and it's about to get worse. Earlier this year Governor Corzine rolled out nearly $2 billion in new taxes to help fix a $4.5-billion deficit. Republicans howled and Democrats went into combat mode, culminating in a recent government shutdown. In the end, Corzine rammed through his budget, but only after a bloody skirmish among Democrats.

AP Photo / Mike Derer

Tom Kean Jr. campaigns with his father, June 6

Kean, 37, has pounced on the tax increase, well aware that the last Republican to win statewide, Governor Christine Todd Whitman, campaigned relentlessly against a tax hike in 1993. Will it work this time? Perhaps. The Kean-Menendez race is now essentially a dead heat, with a July 17 Quinnipiac poll giving Kean a two-point edge. But many attribute that to Kean's biggest strength: his name.

"There is no shortage of politicians in this state who would give their right arm for that name," says New Jersey GOP chairman Tom Wilson. "There is a brand identity already established for the Kean family." Before chairing the 9/11 Commission, Tom Kean Sr. was arguably the most popular governor in state history. A centrist Republican who speaks like a Brahmin, Kean *père* won reelection in 1985 with 68 percent of the vote, including 62 percent of the black vote. His son's poll numbers are now "artificially inflated," says a Menendez aide, by "people who know the Tom Kean name."

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That may be true. But if 64 percent of voters can't identify either candidate, surely Kean's name recognition will give him a boost when these voters tune in. What Kean should worry about is money. As of June 30, Menendez held a commanding $5 million fundraising lead. This is huge in New Jersey, where candidates must buy airtime in the pricey New York and Philadelphia media markets. It's not that the national GOP is ignoring Kean; both Vice President Dick Cheney and First Lady Laura Bush have headlined rallies for him. Some Republicans cite the difficulty of raising cash in a heavily Democratic state. (The last time New Jersey elected a Republican to the Senate was in 1972.) Others blame the Kean campaign for ineptitude.

This gets to the broader rap against Tom Kean Jr.: that he is a political lightweight. Democrats have created a website, *www.toojuniorforjersey.com*, that mocks Kean as a frat boy and a Bush crony. Whereas Menendez is a seasoned campaigner and a hardnosed partisan, the youthful Kean is still a novice. He often speaks in shaky platitudes and may have trouble rousing conservatives, who account for roughly one third of registered Republicans. (In New Jersey, low voter turnout usually helps Democrats.)

The real test for Kean will be in the suburbs of Bergen, the state's most populous county, which borders on the Hudson River. Bergen has recently trended strongly Democratic, says Ingrid Reed, director of the New Jersey Project at the Rutgers-Eagleton Institute of Politics. "That's the county you have to win."

Ultimately, Kean must make this race a referendum not on George W. Bush and Iraq, but on Democratic tax policies. He must divert attention off the national GOP and onto New Jersey. He must raise more cash to reach an apathetic electorate after Labor Day. Perhaps above all, he must get lucky and bank on his family pedigree. As one Republican puts it, "You can't discount the Kean name. You just can't. It's a gold standard." ♦

The French Connection

Why they're being so helpful in Lebanon.

BY OLIVIER GUITTA

FRANCE HAS A LONG HISTORY in Lebanon, a country it administered under a League of Nations mandate from 1920 to 1943 and whose elite is bilingual in French and Arabic. France also has a history with Hezbollah, going back to the group's beginnings more than twenty years ago. In order to appreciate why French president Jacques Chirac is so far hanging tough for the disarming of Hezbollah in the present crisis, it is useful to cast a backward glance. For those 241 U.S. servicemen blown up in their barracks by Hezbollah on October 23, 1983, were not the only Western soldiers to die in Beirut at the hands of the Islamists that day.

A good place to begin the story is 1978, when France contributed troops to UNIFIL, a United Nations force created to monitor the Lebanese-Israeli border. After a long series of Palestinian cross-border raids killing Israelis, the Israeli army had crossed into Lebanon and pushed the Palestine Liberation Organization north of the Litani River. UNIFIL's job was to police the peace. The peace didn't last. In 1982, after another Israeli incursion, some 800 French troops joined an equal number of U.S. Marines and 400 Italian troops to supervise the evacuation of the PLO from Lebanon and serve, once again, as peacekeepers. The same year, Hezbollah was born.

This new Shiite force created and funded by Iran lost no time in targeting the French in Lebanon. First came a rocket attack on soldiers in April 1983; then in August, the hijacking of an Air France jet in Tehran. The hijackers, who belonged to a closely allied pro-Iranian terrorist group, Islamic Amal, demanded France's withdrawal from Lebanon, an end to French military aid to Iraq (then at war with Iran), and the liberation of Lebanese prisoners from French jails.

The mastermind of this operation was Hussein Moussaoui, who, for his next trick, attacked the U.S. and French barracks in Beirut, killing not only those 241 U.S. Marines but also 58 French soldiers. Two weeks later, the DGSE (the French equivalent to the CIA) learned that the Iranian embassy in Beirut had ordered the murder of Gilles Vidal, number two at the French embassy. The DGSE attempted a preemptive strike. They packed 500 kilos of explosives in a French military jeep marked with the Red Cross emblem and parked it next to the Iranian embassy. The trigger failed, so the French agents tried to ignite the explosives with bazooka shots, but this also failed. The Iranians discovered the jeep and with it proof of French responsibility.

The next day, Tehran pointed the finger at France. An influential member of the Iranian parliament, Hojatoleslam Mohammed Ali Mohavedi Kermani, addressing that body, taunted: "The French people are so scared that they could not find anyone ready to martyr himself with their rigged Jeep operation against the Iranian embassy in Beirut. Only the agents of Hezbollah are capable of doing such things."

It was war. In retaliation for the

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barracks attack, France bombed the Islamic Amal and Hezbollah camp in Baalbek. The success of this operation is still debated. While some insist no terrorists were killed, a secret report to President François Mitterrand (subsequently made public) listed more than 20 Lebanese Shiite militants dead (39 according to Lebanese forces), along with 12 Iranian "advisers." The Ayatollah Khomeini denounced France as a "terrorist state."

Iran's revenge was not slow in coming. Hezbollah bombed the French embassy in Kuwait on December 12, then killed ten French soldiers in Lebanon.

On December 21, after a bloody truck bomb attack on a French position, the Islamic Jihad (another name for Hezbollah) claimed responsibility and gave France ten days to leave Lebanon or suffer reprisals. On the 23rd, Paris expelled six Iranian "diplomats" suspected of terrorist ties. And on December 31, Islamic Jihad made good on its threat by bombing simultaneously the Marseilles train station and the high speed Paris-Marseilles train, killing four.

In 1984, to Hezbollah's great satisfaction, French troops left Lebanon for good. Nevertheless, Iran again ordered Hezbollah to target France, mostly because of French support for Saddam Hussein. Between March 1985 and January 1987, Hezbollah took 16 French citizens hostage in Lebanon, most of them journalists and diplomats. Some remained in captivity for as long as three years, and one was murdered.

Boasting of Iran's sponsorship of these activities, Sheikh Fadlallah, "spiritual" leader of Hezbollah, was quoted in the French daily *Libération* as saying: "France is standing in front of a locked vault. There are three keys. The smallest is the Lebanese one. So even if I were holding your countrymen, I could not free them by myself. My little key is not enough. The Syrian key is larger. But it is not enough, either. You need to get the third key, that of Iran."

In addition to kidnappings, Iran, working through Hezbollah, orchestrated a terror campaign in the streets of France between December 1985 and September 1986 that killed 13 and injured hundreds. Alain Marsaud, head of the French counterterrorism unit, summed up the purpose of the campaign this way: "Iran, the sponsor of the attacks, used a Lebanon-based Hezbollah network plus a Maghrebi logistics cell to convince France to change its foreign policy."

In fact, the Tunisian mastermind of the 1986 attacks, Fouad Ali Saleh, was close to many of Hezbollah's top leaders. He had spent three years studying in Qom, Iran, under Ayatollah Khomeini. Upon his arrest, Saleh stated: "Islam's stronghold is Iran. Your country, helping Iraq fight Iran, is an enemy. . . . Our main goal is to bring France back to reason by violent actions."

The DST, the French equivalent of the FBI, noted in its final report to Prime Minister Chirac: "Nothing could have been decided without the blessing of either Iranian parliament president Rafsanjani or Ayatollah Montazeri."

The 1990s were comparatively uneventful, but in February 2000, left-wing prime minister Lionel Jospin described Hezbollah as a "terrorist" group during a press conference in Israel. The French foreign minister, Hubert Védrine, traveling with Jospin, whispered to him: "You went a little too far there!" Whereupon President Chirac angrily reminded Jospin that the president shapes France's foreign policy, not the prime minister. Obviously, Chirac, remembering the bombings and kidnappings of the 1980s, did not want to provoke Hezbollah. Which is why, despite Hezbollah's blood-soaked pedigree, Chirac invited Hassan Nasrallah, the group's secretary general, to attend the Francophone Summit in Beirut in October 2002.

But on December 17, 2003, Chirac's semi-good relationship with Hezbollah came crashing down. By supporting the ban on the hijab—the headscarf worn by some Muslim women—in France's public schools, Chirac incurred the wrath of Sheikh Fadlallah. In a letter to Chirac, Fadlallah threatened "likely complications" if the ban were passed, which it was in 2004.

In recent years, there has been some equivocation in French policy towards Hezbollah. Thus, in May 2004, the French ambassador to the United States, Jean-David Levitte, called Hezbollah mostly a "social" organization. Furthermore, Levitte argued that there was no reason to put the group on the European Union's terrorist list.

Nevertheless, in August 2004, France and the United States cosponsored U.N. Resolution 1559 calling for the removal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and the disarming of militias including Hezbollah, although the French initially hedged on the second point, stressing that Hezbollah could be disarmed only by the Lebanese authorities.

And at home, France took some unilateral actions against Hezbollah. Notably, in December 2004, France banned Al-Manar, Hezbollah's virulently anti-Semitic and propagandistic television channel, though it did so only under tremendous pressure from outraged French politicians and members of the public. The hate speech common on Al-Manar could no longer be ignored in light of the tough French laws on anti-Semitism. The real tipping point in French policy, though, was the murder on February 14, 2005, of Rafik Hariri, former prime minister of Lebanon and a close friend of Jacques Chirac.

France reacted by adopting a tougher stand towards Hezbollah. On August 29, Chirac, addressing French ambassadors, stated that every aspect of Resolution 1559 must be enforced, and Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy reiterated this a few days later in an interview with the newspaper *Asharq Al Awsat*. Minister of European Affairs Catherine Colonna went so far as to condemn Hezbollah's "illegal and violent actions" against Israel.

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Only on the matter of putting Hezbollah on the E.U.'s list of terrorist organizations has France continued to drag its feet. Hezbollah is a political party, say the French, and to declare it a terrorist organization could destabilize Lebanon. Yet France is edging toward linking the T-word with Hezbollah. Gérard Araud, French ambassador to Israel, declared on September 27 that France wants to give Hezbollah "a share in the democratic process and to understand that in this democratic process there's no place for weapons and for terrorism." He went on to say that putting Hezbollah on the terrorist list would change nothing but would play into the hands of the Arab world, which would see in this action "an American-Zionist plot." France "does not want to give them that pleasure."

Then last year, Iran threatened to reactivate its deadly proxy, Hezbollah, if France were to take a harsher stance against it at the U.N. Security Council. This may explain why President Chirac delivered a speech on terrorism on January 19, 2006, in which he declared that in case of a terrorist attack against French allies (most likely the Gulf monarchies) and/or national interests (including oil facilities), the French response might be nuclear. The message was clearly intended for Iran—and Hezbollah.

Since the current fighting in Lebanon began on July 12, after Hezbollah fighters killed eight Israeli soldiers and abducted two more, France's reactions have been a mixed bag. While Chirac has criticized Israel for using "disproportionate force," he has also said there is "no other long-term solution" than to disarm Hezbollah "as soon as possible."

While visiting Haifa on July 23, Foreign Minister Douste-Blazy had to take cover from Hezbollah-launched Katyusha rockets, an event that may have reinforced France's resolve. Said Douste-Blazy, "The first condition for a cease-fire is of course the disarming of Hezbollah." The war of words continues. Now let's see what France does. ♦

The Great Stem Cell Coverup

Promising medical research you never hear about.

BY WESLEY J. SMITH

IT HAS BEEN REPEATED so often that it is now a mantra: "Embryonic stem cells offer the most promise for finding cures" for degenerative diseases and conditions such as Parkinson's disease and spinal cord injury. But saying something ten thousand times doesn't make it true. Indeed, the embryonic stem cell mantra has yet to be demonstrated scientifically.

More than that, the actual data published to date in peer-reviewed science journals tell a far different story. While there have certainly been successes in embryonic stem cell experiments in animal studies—many of them hyped to the hilt in mainstream media reports—the numbers pale in comparison with the many research advances being made with adult and umbilical cord blood stem cells, which are already being used in human patients.

Based on the published science, there are 72 maladies for which human patients have received some benefit (which is not the same as being "cured") from adult stem cell or umbilical cord blood interventions. Meanwhile, embryonic stem cells have yet to demonstrate any human therapeutic use.

This is not to say that embryonic stem cells don't have genuine scientific value. Researchers are excited about the prospect of gaining a more fundamental understanding of developmental biology by experimenting on embryonic stem cells, for example. And embryonic stem cells may well have the capacity to treat human diseases. But to win the current political debate over federal funding of embryo-destructive research, many supporters have made extravagant claims about pending cures. In their zeal, they forget to mention that embryonic stem cells cannot be used safely in human beings at present because of worries over tissue rejection and their demonstrated propensity in animal studies to cause deadly tumors—problems not associated with adult stem cell therapies.

Some adult/umbilical cord stem cell treatments are now deployed in routine clinical practice. But most remain experimental. For example, as reported in the March 2005 edition of the science journal *Blood*, Stage 2 trials are currently underway in human patients with "severe" multiple sclerosis using the patients' own blood stem cells. After three years, the study reported, adult stem cells were "able to induce a prolonged clinical stabilization in severe progressive MS patients," meaning the disease stopped advancing, "resulting in both sustained treatment-free periods and quality-of-life improvements."

Another area of great hope for adult stem cell therapy comes from using a patient's olfactory tissues, found in the nasal cavity, to treat paralysis caused by spinal cord injury. Peer-reviewed animal studies previously highlighted great potential for this technique. For example, olfactory tissues have "promoted partial restoration of function" in paralyzed rats.

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Human studies in this area have been ongoing for several years. In June, Dr. Carlos Lima from Portugal published his first findings in the *Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine*. Of the first seven paralyzed people he treated, "two patients reported return to sensation of their bladders and one of these regained voluntary contraction of anal sphincter." Most "recovered sensation below the initial level of injury." Moreover, "patients exhibited a modest amount of improvement in function that is not normally observed in complete SCIs [spinal cord injuries]," leading to the conclusion that olfactory mucosa "may possibly promote functional recovery in chronic, severe SCI in humans." (Further human trials have now commenced using olfactory tissue in Britain, Italy, and Japan, among other countries.)

If Lima had used embryonic stem cells to help human patients recover some sensation after spinal cord injury, the headline in the *New York Times* would have been printed two inches high in red ink. The report would have been cited far and wide as proof that the late Christopher Reeve was right when he (incorrectly) claimed that embryonic stem cells offered him his "only hope" for recovery. Yet, even though Lima's report is important—with anecdotal evidence of even more encouraging results in subsequent patients—the *Times*, the *Washington Post*, and other mainstream outlets have yet to report on the study.

There is a reason for the news blackout about the many encouraging advances in adult stem cell science. Worried that adult/umbilical cord blood research successes might tip public support away from embryonic research, proponents of federal funding for embryonic stem cell studies, aided by a compliant press, have mounted a vigorous campaign to downplay adult stem cell research.

Toward this end, an unfair and demagogic attack was recently published in *Science* against biologist David Prentice—who has done more than any other person to bring adult stem cell research progress to the public's attention—and the Do No Harm Coalition, which Prentice helped found to keep track of and analyze stem cell research literature.

Specifically, embryonic stem cell and human research cloning proponents Shane Smith, William Neaves, and Steven Teitelbaum in their letter in *Science* accused Prentice of being "deceptive" for claiming that "adult stem cells have now helped patients with at least 65 different human diseases." But Prentice's modest claim is absolutely true (with the number now having reached 72) and based on scientific reports published in peer-reviewed journals. Moreover, Smith, Neaves, and Teitelbaum are the actual deceivers: They accused Prentice of promoting "the falsehood that adult stem cells are already in general [clinical] use," when he has never made any such claim.

Their letter continues the scientific establishment's efforts to keep adult stem cell research successes from being an issue in the stem cell and cloning debates. "Adult stem cell treatments fully tested in all required phases of clinical trials and approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration are available to treat only nine conditions," they sniff.

This is disingenuous. Many advances in adult stem cells are being made overseas, which by definition precludes their receiving FDA approval. Moreover, by their logic, neither the MS nor olfactory tissue research successes cited above should be mentioned in public discourse, since these hopeful avenues of science have not yet completed "all required phases of clinical trials." Nor, for that matter, should we inform the public that the FDA's databank shows that there are more than 500 approved human trials active or recruiting for patients in this country using adult stem cells, with more than 1,100 such approved experiments in all—versus zero for embryonic studies.

On the other hand, if it is only acceptable to discuss stem cell treatments that have actually entered medicine's clinical armamentarium with full FDA approval, embryonic stem cell-boosting scientists and their boosters in the media had better stop chanting the embryonic stem cell mantra.

Embryonic stem cells have not treated a single human patient, and only time can tell whether they ever will. Highlighting the progress of adult/umbilical cord blood stem cells—an uncontroversial therapeutic approach that does not require the destruction of human embryos—is a legitimate part of the public discourse. Indeed, the unfair attack on Prentice for educating the public about the potential of adult stem cells may indicate that these scientist/political advocates know where the true best hope for regenerative medical treatments is likely to be found. ♦

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When Hugo Met Vladimir

Venezuela and Russia are up to no good.

BY REUBEN F. JOHNSON

"I AM JUST GOING CRAZY about how she's doing it so quickly," Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez reportedly said, as he beamed at a young Russian woman in the provincial city of Izhevsk last week. Chávez, who was on a three-day trip to Russia, did not make this statement while carousing at a local strip club. He was marveling at the IzhMash factory's female production-line workers assembling one of the famous Kalashnikov AK-47 assault rifles. He had just made a deal to buy 100,000 of them. And that's not all he bought on his Russian shopping spree. There are also fighter aircraft, advanced radars, and other assorted baubles for Venezuela's air force.

The AK-47, the weapon of choice for armies and insurgent movements around the world, was invented in Izhevsk, about 600 miles east of Moscow. Its designer, Mikhail Kalashnikov, spent most of the first 70-odd years of his life toiling in obscurity—not traveling outside of Russia until the fall of communism, when the export of Russian weapons became big business. Today, at 86, he is treated like a combination rock star/elder statesman at international defense expositions, where he is often seen wearing his Hero of the Soviet Union medals and other decorations. In the last two years, he has even launched his own brand of vodka.

But the success the AK-47's designer has had at promoting his brand has not been mirrored in the sales of his famous rifle. Earlier this year, Vladimir Grodetsky, the CEO of the IzhMash factory, bemoaned the fact that Russia makes only 10 to 12 percent of the sales of the more than one million AK-47s purchased on the world market each year. "The rest are unlicensed copies," he said in a press conference this past April.

AP Photo / Sergei Zhukov

Putin and Chávez in the Kremlin, July 27

Chávez's visit to the factory and the extensive list of agreements he signed the next day at a pomp-and-circumstance-style Kremlin ceremony are all about reversing this trend. Russia makes a number of large weapons systems—fighter aircraft, naval vessels, air defense systems—that it has sold to China and India for billions of dollars, but it has had less success with smaller weapons. More important, it has yet to make a big dent in the Latin American market.

Latin America is one of the last unexplored frontiers in the weapons-export business, as the previous money-making venues in the Pacific Rim and the Middle East have—for the time being—purchased about all they can afford for the next several years. Most of Latin America's air forces operate an odd mix of older model U.S. and French aircraft, many of which date to before the weapons embargoes that were clamped on South American dictatorships in the late 1970s. Some of these aircraft have been modernized by Israeli firms in the years since as a stop-gap, but it is only recently that the new Latin American democracies—unencumbered by those sanctions—have begun to rearm themselves with more modern weaponry.

The Chilean air force took delivery this year of the first of a batch of Lockheed Martin F-16s, and last year Brazil signed an agreement with France to purchase a number of used Dassault Mirage 2000 fighters from the French air force. Previously, Brazil's navy had purchased the Clemenceau-class aircraft carrier *Foch* from France, since renamed the *São Paulo*, and equipped it with a wing of Douglas A-4 Skyhawk carrier aircraft that it acquired used from the Kuwaiti air force.

Russia has had no such luck on this continent. A handful of Russia's most advanced fighter jets, the Mikoyan MiG-29, were sold to Peru in the early

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The Kalashnikov vodka website

1990s, but these were used aircraft purchased not from Russia but from its neighbor, Belarus.

Chávez's visit and the impressive list of arms deals he signed give the Russians their first big weapons bonanza in Latin America, and enemies of Chávez, in Washington and elsewhere, another big headache. He has already taken delivery of 30,000 of the 100,000 AK-47s. Concern that many of these assault rifles might end up in the hands of Colombian rebels or the drug lord armies in the *favelas* around Rio de Janeiro is well-founded. But the more serious dangers created by the new Caracas-Moscow axis are longer-term and can be found in the other deals the two have reached.

The total bill for Venezuela's arms purchases in Russia will exceed $1 billion and includes 24 Sukhoi Su-35 Super Flanker fighter aircraft—a system so advanced that not even the Russian air force has this model in its inventory yet. Based on the famous Su-27 and Su-30MK fighters, the Su-35 is a slightly larger, more powerful, modernized version of its predecessors. It will incorporate the latest in avionics and weapons systems, including a radar system superior to that used by the Indian air force's Su-30MKIs, which defeated U.S. Air Force F-15 and F-16 aircraft in recent joint exercises. It will make Venezuela the big kid on the block in South America and will significantly increase the striking range of the Venezuelan air force. Chávez could conceivably now offer air support against the Americans to his friend Fidel Castro should the United States decide to take action against Cuba in the future.

There are also things to worry about in the nondefense deals that are ancillary to these arms sales contracts. Chávez is known to be incensed at the embargo on spare parts and other military assistance that the United States has placed on his country, and on two occasions he has threatened to sell the F-16s his country acquired in the 1980s during a period of good relations with Washington. On one occasion he said he would give them to the Cuban air force. Later, he suggested he might sell them instead to Iran. Although these are older export models of the F-16A/B series and are far outclassed by those operated by the U.S. Air Force today, turning them over to either of those nations would represent a technology jackpot for those dictators and a blow to U.S. interests.

The other half of the Venezuela-Russia dealings last week is just as disturbing. That's the oil deal Chávez agreed to in a meeting with LUKoil president Vagit Alekperov in Volgograd. The Russian oil company will start exploration in two areas of Venezuela, one of which, near the Orinoco River, is thought to contain substantial oil reserves.

Experience shows that when Moscow signs big weapons sales and energy deals, the tentacles of Russian organized crime are not far behind. Russia recently signed an even larger arms-plus-oil-and-gas deal with Algeria, in which the energy sector payoffs are so large that the weapons purchases are almost like the toy prize in a McDonald's Happy Meal by comparison. "The fighters and other weapons are practically being given away in this deal," said one Moscow-based aerospace industry analyst, "and the sums of money that are being bandied about are so large it is frightening."

When the Russian mafia first became a concern in the mid-1990s, former CIA director James Woolsey testified before Congress that "if an American businessman meets with a nattily dressed and articulate Russian who claims that he is with an international trading and banking firm in Moscow and he would like to discuss a joint venture covering, say, the export of Russian oil, such an individual may be what he says he is. Or he may be a Russian intelligence officer operating under commercial cover. Or he may be an important member of a Russian organized crime group. But the really interesting point is that there is a reasonable chance that he is all three—and that none of those three institutions sees any problem with such an arrangement."

And it is just such an "arrangement" that the United States may find on its doorstep thanks to the Venezuelan president. AK-47s can come from almost anywhere these days—50 countries use this infantry weapon, and six of them even include it as an icon on their nation's coat of arms. But problems on a scale this mega-deal could cause in the Americas can only come from Moscow. ♦

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Mr. Compassionate Conservative

Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas considers a run for president. So why is he spending a night in prison?

By Terry Eastland

Ellsworth, Kansas

On the last day of May, at 5:30 P.M., Building 5 of the Ellsworth Correctional Facility is filled with joyful noise. More than 200 prisoners—roughly a quarter of the inmates at this state prison—have gathered for the midweek worship service. They're taking part in a program run by InnerChange Freedom Initiative, an affiliate of Prison Fellowship, its purpose being to effect such change in the heart of a prisoner that he will, upon release, go and commit crime no more. The men, clad in the standard correctional attire of blue jeans and blue shirt, many holding well-thumbed Bibles, are serving time for crimes such as assault, battery, and rape. Led by a band of fellow inmates, they've been singing praise and worship songs. They reach the end of Mark McCoy and Andy Park's "I See the Lord" when a special visitor arrives, accompanied by an intense late afternoon thunderstorm. Wearing a blue shirt and red tie, Sam Brownback, Kansas's senior senator, soon steps to the front. He begins speaking with an ease that suggests he has been here before, which he has, three times.

"So good to see you guys, and so good to see this program," says Brownback, who moves quickly to his main points. The country spent the '80s and '90s building more prisons and incarcerating more criminals, he says, noting that "we needed to do that." But now the U.S. prison population exceeds two million, "the biggest number we've ever had." Once released, most go back to "the old group"—to the "bad company that corrupts good morals," he says, using a passage from the first letter to the Corinthians. Many are rearrested and wind up back in prison. Brownback mentions a Justice Department finding that almost two-thirds of those released from prison are rearrested within three years. He says he'd like to see that number, the recidivism rate, cut in half over the next five years.

The senator talks about how to achieve that goal by pointing to the program his audience knows well. IFI and other prerelease programs, says Brownback, can help inmates break their "bondage" to the past and prepare for a new life with people who can "pull you up, and not down." He also discusses his Second Chance Act, which would authorize $40 million to help newly released prisoners with housing, drug treatment, counseling, job training, and education. Brownback says reducing the recidivism rate is not only about turning around the lives of those who have committed crimes but also about "breaking the generational curse . . . so that it doesn't go to your kids and grandkids."

During the Q&A, some prisoners choose to make statements, especially about the importance of IFI, which includes daily Bible and life skills classes. Brownback listens intently, occasionally posing questions. At one point he brings up "another topic I've been working on," namely "how the welfare system actually penalizes [poor] people for getting married." Brownback finds this perverse, since studies show that if you get married and stay married, you are less likely to remain poor. Brownback mentions the hearings he's held on this topic, and how he'd like to eliminate from federal law what he calls "the disincentives" to marriage. The session ends with more than a dozen men crowding around Brownback, praying. And Brownback's visit has only just begun.

After a dinner prepared by one of the inmate chefs, Brownback visits a work area, where prisoners fix broken bikes and renovate wheelchairs and learn to build houses. Then it's over to Building 4, where InnerChange prisoners are assigned. The building is laid out in "pods"—several individual cells, locked at night, arranged around a common area. Brownback moves from pod to pod. Sort of a meet and greet. Many of the inmates are watching Game 5 of the Eastern Conference Finals, between the Pistons and the Heat. You can see on their shelves various books,

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including Bible concordances and commentaries.

Leaving Building 4, Brownback goes to the spacious (9,167 square feet) Spiritual Life Center, recently built to accommodate a growing inmate demand for religious programs. On its website, the Kansas Department of Corrections describes the center as providing "opportunities for inmates from diverse faiths to develop and restore relationships with God, their families, and crime victims." In a conference room, Brownback engages a dozen inmates in an hour-long conversation about their post-prison hopes. He tells one who calls him "Mr. Brownback" to change that to "Sam." And "Sam" it is. To another prisoner he says, "Your experience sounds like my own. You don't recognize temptation when you should." A prayer by Brownback closes the meeting, and then the senator retraces his steps to Building 4 and then to G-pod, cell 42, where, locked down, he spends the night.

You might not expect someone weighing a presidential run in 2008 to spend a dozen hours in a state prison; it's not exactly the best place to go in search of campaign dollars or volunteers. But once you grasp Sam Brownback's political vision, his visit to the Ellsworth Correctional Facility seems less odd.

Earlier this year, Brownback gave a lecture at Kansas State, his alma mater. He chose as his topic "American exceptionalism"—the idea, as he explained it, that our country is a "special place" and that it has a "special destiny for mankind." Brownback said that the source of American exceptionalism lies in "our fundamental goodness," and that while we have had our problems and "often get things wrong," we eventually find our way, because "some movement based on goodness and fixing what's wrong" starts up and doesn't stop until the problem is fixed. Like the abolitionist movement, which settled in Kansas "with a heart to end slavery." And the civil rights movement, which sought to end segregation.

Those movements, said Brownback, fought for "the inherent dignity" of every person, for "righteousness and justice." In our time, he continued, we must carry on this fight by reaching out to people who need help—"the poor and dispossessed," including prisoners and their families. We need to defend the dignity of people "no matter where they are, no matter what they look like, no matter what their status." And not just here at home. Brownback pointed to the sub-Saharan region of Africa, where he said 60 percent of the children have malaria; to Darfur, where the genocide continues; and to the Congo, where "an estimated 1,000 preventable deaths" occur every day.

Brownback didn't use his speech to offer a complete inventory of the people he thinks Americans should be reaching out to. But interviews with Brownback leave little doubt that it is a long list. It includes "the unborn," meaning the roughly 25 percent of the unborn who are aborted in the United States. And people who are physically and mentally disabled. And poor immigrants, including those here illegally. And people overseas who are persecuted for their political and religious beliefs; who are discriminated against and killed because of their race or ethnicity; who are sold into slavery; who are stricken with malaria and AIDS.

Not limited government, but compassionate government is Brownback's chief preoccupation. His focus on compassion comes, he says, from his Christian faith—specifically from the Second Great Commandment, which is to love your neighbor as yourself. "I have that up on my office wall, on a page, framed," he says. Brownback points out that the First Great Commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind, and it is "love for the divine" that "animates and gives you love for others." Brownback often uses Biblical terms to refer to those in need—such as "widows and orphans," "the least of these," and "foreigner in the land."

In his neighbor-love emphasis, Brownback resembles no politician so much as he does George W. Bush, who ran for president as a compassionate conservative. But Brownback believes that compassionate conservatism is "an area that lacks development," by which he means that the compassion part hasn't been extensive enough in its reach and that it needs to be broadened, particularly "toward the poor, in this country and internationally." He sees a "growth opportunity" here for conservatism and in turn for the Republican party.

Indeed, Brownback thinks the country is changing in a way that would make it more responsive to a more compassion-driven GOP. Since the mid-1990s, the nation has been undergoing what he calls "an awakening." You can see it "in poll numbers, in people's attitudes," he says. "It's an active faith, a very meaningful thing in people's lives." He points to a factory worker he met at the GM plant in Kansas City who was wearing "a ball cap that says 'God loves you.'" He mentions the people who come up to him saying, "I'm praying for you."

Brownback describes the awakening as "spiritual," not just religious or Christian. He points to "the 150 college kids who [in late April] walked two miles in the rain to the state capital" in Topeka "to recognize the plight of children in northern Uganda." Brownback is referring to children who walk up to 20 miles a day to find a safe place to sleep, where the rebel army won't abduct them. This has been going on for two decades. But "what hasn't been happening" until now, Brownback says, "is college students in the United States saying, 'This is wrong and I'm going to do something about it.'" Both Christian and "non-faith-oriented" students, says Brownback, made the two-mile walk

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(as did he). "A liberal bleeding heart group, and a Christian bleeding heart group. . . . And that's the beauty of it. The two groups are finding each other."

Brownback may be one of the few Republican politicians who believe that compassionate conservatism is still the ticket to the White House. National security issues are likely to remain dominant through 2008. And many conservatives are wary of compassionate conservatism, seeing it as a stimulus to government expansion and a seductive path to misguided policy. Brownback's "compassionate" position on immigration—he voted for the Senate bill, which would create a guest worker program and create a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants—has drawn fire from Republican colleagues in both the House and the Senate, and from publications like *Human Events*.

The senator says he will decide whether to run for president before the elections this fall and then announce his decision soon afterwards. Right now he gets one to two percent in surveys of Republican voters. His candidacy would have to be considered a long shot. But it would satisfy certain threshold tests.

Brownback, who will turn 50 in September, has executive and legislative experience, and is well versed on national security issues. Thoughtful and well respected in both parties, he is politically shrewd and a proven vote getter. Of importance especially to Republican primary voters, he is a committed tax cutter and free trader. He has supported the war on terrorism and championed the cause of human rights and democracy abroad. Outspoken in behalf of the need to appoint judicial conservatives, he was one of the first Republican senators to question the merits of the Supreme Court nomination of Harriet Miers. Few Republican politicians are as close as Brownback is to leading religious conservatives, a key part of the Republican coalition. Tony Perkins, head of the Family Research Council, says of Brownback, "Many have the right voting records, but he has leadership." It's not a stretch to think that the Kansas Republican could appeal to conservative voters in the nearby Iowa caucuses, which will kick off the 2008 primary season.

Like another famous Republican, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Sam Brownback comes from Pennsylvania farmers of German descent who moved to eastern Kansas after the Civil War. His parents still run the family's 800-acre farm, which is near Parker (pop. 281), itself a few miles from Osawatomie, where evangelical abolitionists congregated during the Bleeding Kansas of the 1850s. Admitted to the Union in 1861, Kansas has proved to be one of the nation's most Republican states, having last elected a Democratic senator in 1932. Not surprisingly, Brownback's parents were Republicans. But they weren't involved in party politics. "They thought it was okay to do, but don't let it get in the way of work." And young Brownback liked the work. He liked farming.

In high school he was elected state president of Future Farmers of America, and became a national officer of the organization. Brownback credits his time in FFA with getting him interested in politics. In 1976, while at Kansas State, he campaigned for Ronald Reagan in his failed bid to wrest the nomination from President Gerald Ford. After finishing college in 1978, Brownback took a job as a farm broadcaster, hosting a half-hour radio show at noon on weekdays. "I'd grown up listening to farm broadcasters," he says. "Conversation stopped around our table when the broadcaster read the markets. . . . It stirred my interest in international affairs, since what was going on in the Soviet Union or Brazil or Australia affected our markets for wheat and soybeans."

In 1979, Brownback enrolled in the law school at the University of Kansas. In 1980, he again volunteered for Reagan. "I just thought Reagan got it right," he says. "Here was finally somebody who made a whole lot of sense to me, who understood the difference between right and wrong, and who was willing to stand up for what's right." He recalls when he first heard about Reagan's famous 1983 speech in which the president described the Soviet Union as an "evil empire." Brownback says he was out in a field on a tractor, the news coming over the radio. "I was beating on the dashboard, saying, 'That's right. That's right.' And then I heard commentators saying this was dangerous, that it was a bad move to call the Soviet Union an evil empire. But that's what it was."

Taking his law degree in 1982, Brownback practiced for four years in Manhattan, Kansas. In 1986, he was appointed secretary of the state board of agriculture, a position he held until 1993. In 1990, on his second try, he was accepted as a White House Fellow. It was his first taste of Washington, and he spent the year working for the special trade representative, Carla Hills.

In 1994, Brownback ran for Congress. The Second District, which takes in much of eastern Kansas, opened up, and Brownback beat out two competitors in the Republican primary and then defeated John Carlin, the former Democratic governor, by an almost two-to-one margin, carrying every county. Across the country, of course, the GOP had a hugely successful Election Day. The party captured both the House and the Senate for the first time in 40 years. And the new House Republican members were fired with excitement. "I had never lived under a GOP Congress," says Brownback, who was part of what he calls "the hard core," its great ambition to reduce the size and scope of the federal government. "We were going to change the world and do it in six months." It didn't happen. The hard core targeted for

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elimination four cabinet agencies, Housing, Energy, Education, and Commerce, all of which are still standing today.

In 1996 Brownback moved to the Senate. The senior senator from Kansas, Bob Dole, had resigned in June to run for president on the GOP ticket, with more than two years remaining in his term. Appointed to fill the vacancy was the Republican lieutenant governor, Sheila Frahm, who enjoyed the support of the Dole organization. Brownback challenged Frahm in the primary and won 55 to 42 percent. Brownback credits Pat Robertson with an assist. In his 1988 presidential run, Robertson, competing against Dole, had mobilized many religious conservatives not previously active in politics. Brownback believes their votes helped secure his victory over Frahm. In the general election, Brownback easily won, having promised Kansans that he would serve no more than two terms. He has understood that promise to refer to the two full terms he won by large margins in 1998 and 2004. In the 2004 election, Brownback captured more votes than anyone who had ever run for any office in Kansas.

Brownback's voting record contains almost no surprises. "Yes," to impeach President Clinton, outlaw partial birth abortion, phase out the estate and gift taxes, authorize permanent trade relations with China, approve the Bush tax cuts, permit oil and gas development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, authorize the use of military force against Iraq, approve the Medicare prescription drug benefit, and confirm John Roberts and Sam Alito. But "No," to enact McCain-Feingold, the campaign finance law, extend the ban on the sale and possession of assault weapons, and restrict deployment of a national missile defense system.

Brownback has spent much of his time in the Senate on life and family issues. Besides opposing *Roe* v. *Wade*, he has sponsored the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act, the Prenatally Diagnosed Conditions Awareness Act, and the Human Cloning Prohibition Act. Brownback's longstanding campaign to hold the media industry accountable led in June to enactment of the Broadcast Decency Enforcement Act, which increases tenfold the fines that the Federal Communications Commission can levy for a single incident of indecency, such as Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" during the halftime show at the 2004 Super Bowl. Brownback also has supported the constitutional amendment that would define marriage as between a man and a woman and thus ban "same-sex marriage."

Brownback probably keeps track of issues of concern to social conservatives more keenly than any other senator. He runs the weekly meetings of the Values Action Team, attended by representatives of 30 to 40 organizations, including the Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, Eagle Forum, Christian Coalition, National Right to Life, Prison Fellowship, and the American Center for Law and Justice. Brownback meets with no other group so regularly, nor is it possible to find many causes advanced by social conservatives that he hasn't supported. Brownback's deep interest in the social issues agenda was evident when I asked him what his big idea will be if he runs for president: "Mine is going to be to rebuild the culture and the family."

Along with that, he is an ardent humanitarian. Brownback has concentrated on the difficult situations in Iran, Afghanistan, Sudan, Uganda, the Congo, Pakistan, Ukraine, China, North Korea, and Vietnam. Arguably no senator has done more to press for human rights and democracy, or to confront the spread of deadly disease, such as malaria, which kills roughly 800,000 children in Africa every year. He has made a habit in this arena of cosponsoring laws with Democrats, teaming up, for example, with Evan Bayh on the Iran Democracy Act, Ted Kennedy on the North Korea Human Rights Act, and the late Paul Wellstone on the Trafficking in Victims Protection Act. According to his close friend and colleague Jim DeMint of South Carolina, Brownback knows that "if you get a few Democrats to work with you, you have a much better chance of getting something done."

You also are probably not going to be known for attacking Democrats. "I'd be surprised if he's said a negative word about anyone," says DeMint. Actually, rare is the interview, or appearance—including the one in the Spiritual Life Center at the Ellsworth prison—in which he does not confess to having negatively judged Kennedy or Hillary Clinton for their wrongheaded views. But "I'm with Mother Teresa," he says. "If you're too busy judging people, you can't love them."

Brownback wins praise from liberals for his engagement on international issues—*New York Times* columnist Nick Kristof seems to compose an encomium to Brownback every six months or so. Liberals also admire his work with House Democrat John Lewis to win authorization for the African-American Museum on the National Mall, and with Sen. Byron Dorgan on a resolution apologizing to Native Americans for wrongs committed against them by the federal government. The purpose of the museum and the apology, says Brownback, is to "educate, talk about the past, and help us move toward reconciliation" with two groups that "didn't feel like America had been fair to them."

Reflecting on his 12 years in Washington, Brownback says, "I came in as a staunch conservative in favor of balancing the budget and cutting taxes." He says he still strongly supports those positions (he can talk at length about the flat tax he favors), but his real passion lies elsewhere. "With the cancer in 1995"—he was found to have melanoma on his back and underwent successful surgery—"I did a lot of internal examination. My conclusion was that if this were

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to be terminal, at that point in time I would not be satisfied with how I had lived life. I had tried to be a Christian, but I had failed."

Brownback says he decided to trust God "a lot more, and let that love of His animate what I would do." He drew inspiration from the political career of William Wilberforce, the 18th- and 19th-century evangelical member of parliament whose great achievement was the abolition of the slave trade. Brownback read biographies of Wilberforce and was especially impressed with Wilberforce's *A Practical Christianity*. Brownback says he became "concerned about the poor, the downtrodden, those without a voice, those in difficult circumstances." Compassion became his agenda. "That [explains] my focus on Africa, the poor, on racial reconciliation." In legislating against human trafficking, Brownback says he found himself challenging a modern form of "the same slave battle" that Wilberforce fought. Not surprisingly, he calls the anti-trafficking law he cosponsored with Wellstone his "most significant legislative achievement."

Brownback is a Catholic, but he didn't grow up as one. "Parker had one church and it was a Methodist church, and that's where we went," unless "we were planting and harvesting." When he and his wife Mary were first married, they went to mainline Protestant churches. Five years ago, the Brownbacks and their five children—the two youngest are adopted, one from China, the other from Guatemala—started going to Topeka Bible Church, mainly because of its youth programs. It was a year later that Brownback was received into the Roman Catholic Church in a ceremony in Washington, D.C. Brownback, who helped secure bipartisan support for awarding a Congressional Gold Medal to Mother Teresa in 1997, says that he just felt gradually pulled to the Catholic faith. He flies home to Topeka every weekend, and on Sundays he goes to mass early and then joins his wife and children at Topeka Bible.

That's an unusual Sunday morning schedule, to say the least. TBC is a large, evangelical congregation, believing, as stated on its website, that "salvation is by grace through faith in Christ as personal savior and sin bearer and is entirely a free gift of God. It cannot possibly be achieved by man's works." Suffice it to say, the Catholic Church does not teach the same thing. The doctrine of salvation, after all, is what the Reformation was mainly about. Asked how evangelicals and Catholics get along in Kansas, a state still overwhelmingly Protestant, Brownback says, "It's not bad," adding that "it's the rare Sunday" when the messages conflict. "I can't remember anyone saying, 'this group teaches this and we teach that.'"

A generation ago, Brownback's status as an adult convert to Catholicism would probably have been a major handicap in a run for the Republican presidential nomination. In recent decades, however, evangelicals and Catholics have worked together in the practical arena of politics, in support of many positions the senator holds. Today, his straddle of the two faith communities might well be his most potent political asset.

In particular, his international focus could appeal to a growing number of evangelical Protestants. Evangelical churches continue to send a large number of missionaries into the Third World, where Christianity has grown dramatically (while weakening in the West). And thanks to modern technology, churches stay in much closer touch with their missionaries, and they hear from them about many of the very issues that concern Brownback. "A religious community that 50 years ago would have been associated with isolationism in the heartland," says University of Oklahoma political scientist Allen Hertzke, "is more internationalist than other communities." This perspective is well represented at the table when the Values Action Team meets. As one Senate staffer told me, sex trafficking and the genocide in Darfur are prominent among the issues the group discusses.

Brownback would be the nation's fourth and the GOP's first Catholic presidential nominee. In 1960, when John F. Kennedy was the Democratic nominee, 71 percent of Catholics favored the Democratic party. By 2004, the percentage had dropped to 44, with 41 percent identifying with the GOP. Catholics have become "a crucial swing vote," says Hertzke, noting that in the last two presidential elections "the story as much as anything was about how the Democratic candidate lost key Catholic voters." Bush won 47 percent of Catholic voters in 2000 and 52 percent in 2004.

Of course, a critical percentage of those voters could swing to the Democratic nominee in 2008, and there is survey evidence that some Catholics who voted for Bush in 2004, as political scientist John Green of the University of Akron told me, "have now grown unhappy." He says that Brownback, because of his compassion agenda, is the sort of politician who "could make them happier." Green says mainline Protestants who like the idea of "doing good things in the world" also could warm to Brownback. And so, he adds, could black and Hispanic churchgoers.

Brownback's notion that his compassion agenda might constitute "a growth opportunity" for the GOP isn't far-fetched, especially given the prevalence of religion in our political discourse today. Green says such an agenda "wouldn't completely change the nature of the Republican coalition," but it might "grow support among certain [religiously identified] communities."

While Brownback says love for God leads to love for neighbor, he also thinks you can be compassionate toward

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others without being a person of faith. Theist or atheist or agnostic, Christian or whatnot, you can stand with equal conviction with whoever is in need. "That's the beauty of the moment," he says, a phrase he often uses. "There can be this coming together of left and right on these topics and there can be a lot of effective things happening."

Brownback's compassion agenda is still in development. The senator recognizes that "people can have good hearts," but "come out a lot of different ways" on policy means and ends. Brownback allows that policy abroad, whatever else it may achieve, is supposed to further the national interest. Asked why America should be so deeply concerned about Africa, he says we can't deny our interest in a part of the world with so much suffering, especially when we have the capacity to address it, and especially when, if we aren't there, making positive relationships, we will be ceding Africa to the Chinese, who are "all over" the continent in search of natural resources, and also to terrorists looking for headquarters. Neither of those prospects, he says, can be in our national interest. Meanwhile, Brownback tends to address the question of means from the standpoint of efficiency. For example, he wants to make sure that dollars appropriated to combat malaria are used not for conferences and meetings, but for bed nets and insecticide sprays.

Regarding the domestic side of the compassion agenda, Brownback shows the influence of his late colleague Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who famously said: "The central conservative truth is that it is culture, not politics, that determines the success of a society. The central liberal truth is that politics can change a culture and save it from itself." Brownback agrees that politics can change a culture, and he believes that poverty can best be addressed through a politics that (in general outline) encourages people to get married, get a job, and not to have children out of wedlock. He wants policies with "measurable results" and cautions against ones that create "dependency." Here he may be trying to distinguish his compassion agenda from that being discussed among Democrats, at least some of whom (John Edwards, Barack Obama) are now invoking religious faith as the motivation for new action against poverty.

Faith-based programs are decidedly among those Brownback expects to produce measurable results. For example, a program like Prison Fellowship's InnerChange Freedom Initiative must reduce the recidivism rate. A study of IFI at a Texas prison indicated that it had cut the rate considerably. But still, "we don't know very much" about the impact of these programs, says Baylor University's Byron Johnson, who conducted that study. He says that it takes time and money to collect the necessary data, and that until recently government hasn't been interested in having such programs, much less in studying their effectiveness. Which faith-based programs are constitutional is another outstanding question, underscored two days after Brownback's visit to Ellsworth when a federal judge in Iowa found a similar IFI program in that state to violate the First Amendment's ban on establishing religion.

Brownback would need to raise $6 million to $10 million to have a shot at winning the Iowa caucus in early 2008. The field will be big—probably at least nine candidates—so it may take no more than 25 percent of the vote to win. And Brownback is the next best thing to a native son. He's from a nearby state, and can get there often. Also, Iowa, like Kansas, is an agriculture state, and roughly 30 percent of the caucus voters are social conservatives.

The former Kansas agriculture secretary and chair of the Values Action Team in the Senate should have no trouble finding topics of interest to caucus voters. Attorney Chuck Hurley, a longtime friend of Brownback's and former state legislator, now head of the Iowa Family Policy Center, says Brownback has also "built respectful, trusting relationships with [Iowa] moderates." He thinks Brownback's Iowa support could reach "into the 40s."

No Republican presidential nominee has failed to finish in the top three in Iowa. But Brownback might have to finish first to attract the money necessary to make more than a token effort in New Hampshire, where other candidates will be better positioned, and to campaign hard for Super Tuesday, when he might have better prospects.

Mike Murphy, the veteran GOP strategist, contemplates an Iowa caucus in which Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee and Brownback contend for the support of social conservatives—and split their votes, leaving both out of the top three finishers. At best, if Brownback wins the Iowa caucus, Murphy thinks it's likely he'll "get some attention and then fade out."

Professor Hertzke wonders whether Brownback's "understated quality . . . is made for the rough and tumble" of the GOP primaries. "He's uncomfortable with the tenor of talk radio. He's not a culture warrior." He "may play better in a general election when there is scrutiny of character" and the candidates often pitch to the political middle.

And Brownback's own take on what's ahead? "In 1980, the message and the moment and the person came together in Reagan," he told me over breakfast at K.C.'s Diner, across the street from the Ellsworth prison. "That's what's required for a presidential run. Maybe I get into it to develop this philosophy, to lay it out, like Reagan did [in 1976]. I'd say, 'I think this is the way we ought to go.' And if people aren't ready for it yet—well, that could be the case. Then four years later, they might say, 'That's exactly what we need to do.'" Brownback sounds like a man about to run, and prepared to run again. ♦

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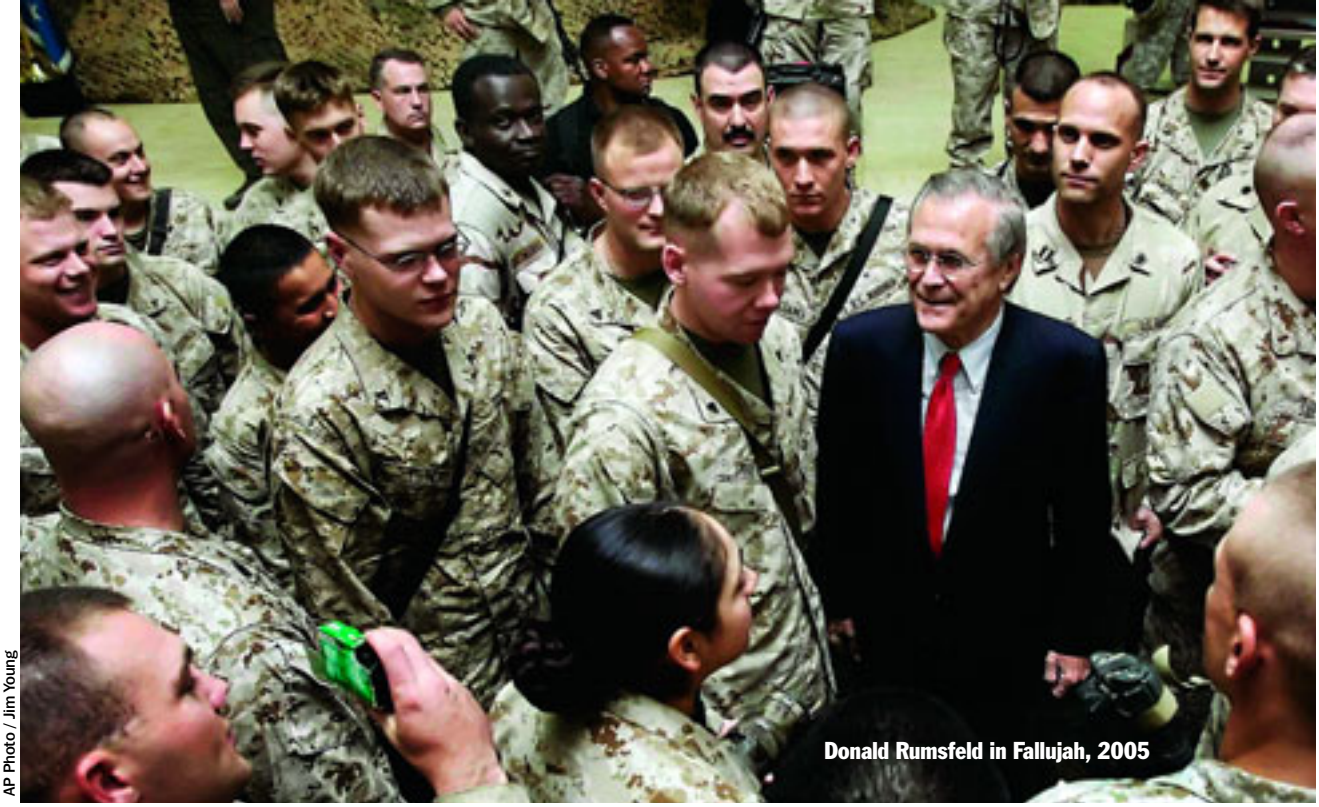

AP Photo / Jim Young

Donald Rumsfeld in Fallujah, 2005

Battle for Baghdad

Lessons learned from the war in Iraq By Max Boot

This is a good book with a bad title. Anyone picking up a volume called *Fiasco*, with a snarky subtitle referring to "The American Military Adventure in Iraq," might expect another tome from the Michael Moore School of Policy Studies, with its level of analysis restricted to bumper-sticker slogans like "Bush Lied, People Died."

In fact, this is a carefully researched account of the Iraq war by one of America's premier defense correspondents—Thomas Ricks of the *Washington Post*. His findings of pervasive high-level ineptitude, based on hundreds of interviews and thousands of pages of documents, will be much harder for reflexive defenders of the Bush administration to dismiss than the usual farrago of ideologically motivated accusations from political adversaries.

Which is not to say that Ricks avoids all the traps of administration critics. He sometimes indulges in hyperbole, calling the Iraq war "one of the most profligate actions in the history of American foreign policy" and suggesting that it "was based on perhaps the worst war plan in American history." Really? When did the conflict in Iraq, where fewer than 3,000 American soldiers have died, become worse than the clashes in Korea and Vietnam, where 95,000 Americans perished?

Fiasco
The American Military Adventure in Iraq
by Thomas E. Ricks
Penguin, 496 pp., $27.95

Ricks also delivers a few cheap shots against George W. Bush and Dick Cheney. He rather mysteriously claims that Bush was "at times more in sync with the attitudes of sixties radical Jerry Rubin than with those of Winston Churchill." How so? He explains that Bush was "willing, a bit like Jerry Rubin, to take a chance and then groove on the ensuing rubble." As a bit of character analysis this is no more convincing—and no less insulting—than his suggestion that Dick Cheney went from being an advocate of containing Saddam Hussein in 1991 to overthrowing him in 2002 "perhaps because of his heart ailments, which can alter a person's personality." Or perhaps the reason was that Cheney saw that containment wasn't working.

This is Ricks's big blind spot. He is passionately committed to the view, espoused by retired Marine general Anthony Zinni, that "containment worked" and that Saddam posed no threat to anyone by 2003. He is too quick to accuse the Bush administration of distorting prewar intelligence without noting that the Clinton administration and our European allies reached the same conclusions about Saddam's weapons of mass destruction.

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(Which is why so many Clinton veterans backed the invasion.) Amazingly enough, Ricks never once mentions the U.N. Oil-for-Food program, which had been perverted by Saddam into a mechanism that allowed him to siphon off billions of dollars for his own nefarious purposes while leaving Iraqi babies to starve. Nor does he mention that U.N. weapons inspector Hans Blix told the Security Council on January 27, 2003, that "Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance—not even today—of the disarmament which was demanded of it."

He does mention, but only in passing and near the end of his book, the conclusion of arms inspector Charles Duelfer that, while Saddam had gotten rid of his stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, he "had tried to preserve the intellectual and physical ability to restart the weapons programs at some point."

Ricks is right that containment worked better than most observers believed in 2002, but he goes overboard in dismissing altogether the case for war. He is much better in assessing what went wrong, and why, after the decision to invade had been made. To be sure, *Fiasco* does not add too much to our store of knowledge about what happened in the run-up to the war and during the three-week blitzkrieg to Baghdad in the spring of 2003. That ground has been exhaustively covered, not only in various periodicals (including the *Washington Post*) but also in such books as *Cobra II* by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor and *The Assassins' Gate* by George Packer. Ricks adds value by tilting the balance of his narrative toward the guerrilla war that began in the summer of 2003, picking up where *Cobra II* left off.

Ricks's view is that "a large and persistent insurgency" wasn't inevitable. (Although he doesn't say so, this makes the case for invasion stronger.) If not created, it was at least inflamed by numerous miscalculations made by the American occupiers. He takes Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, General Tommy Franks, and various others to the woodshed for not sending enough troops to pacify a country of 25 million people. Plans to dispatch additional troops after the fall of Baghdad—both the 1st Cavalry Division and 1st Armored Division were ready to go—were cancelled by the Pentagon over the objections of commanders on the ground.

The most damning comment on the lack of American manpower comes from Col. Teddy Spain, commander of a military police brigade that was stripped of 17 of 20 companies before being deployed to Baghdad in the spring of 2003.

"I think we could have taken control of the streets much better," he is quoted as saying. "I think Baghdad would have been different. I just didn't have the assets."

As we now know, that problem was exacerbated by the decision made by newly appointed viceroy L. Paul Bremer III to dissolve the Iraqi army and security services, setting loose thousands of armed malcontents. Bremer has justified his decision by arguing that the Iraqi military had, in effect, dissolved itself. But, as Ricks writes, "that's not the way many others remember what happened. 'We were working with the army when we were told to disband them,' recalled Marine Maj. Gen. [James] Mattis."

The most bizarre aspect of the dissolution decree was that it ran counter to decisions ratified by President Bush before the invasion and never reversed in Washington. Ricks writes that "Rumsfeld was surprised by Bremer's move," and he quotes Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz on Bremer: "He ignored my suggestions. He ignored Rumsfeld's instructions." (*Cobra II* offers a slightly different account: "While Rumsfeld had been consulted in advance, other key players were blindsided by the edict.")

Unfortunately, this was all too typical of the confusion and outright chaos that characterized American policy-making for at least a year after the collapse of Saddam's regime. Administration apologists like to claim that many of the problems encountered in Iraq weren't foreseeable, but Ricks shows that most them were, in fact, foreseen by far-sighted analysts such as retired officers Gary Anderson and Conrad Crane, who were, alas, ignored by most decision-makers.

As a veteran observer of the military, Ricks is not willing, like so many other critics, to lay all the blame on Bush, Rumsfeld, Bremer, and assorted civilian "neocons." He lashes them for their errors, but he is also scathing in his portrayal of an American military that, in the years since the Vietnam war, managed to forget everything it had ever learned about how to fight an insurgency.

His indictment begins with General Franks, who came up with a plan to win a battle but had no comprehension of how to win the war. (One of *Fiasco*'s typically blunt subheads: "Franks flunks strategy.") During the critical period after Baghdad's fall, Franks shook up the U.S. command structure, placing in charge of the whole country a junior lieutenant general named Ricardo Sanchez who, Ricks writes, "often appeared overwhelmed by the situation, with little grasp of the strategic problems he faced." Moreover, Sanchez was not given enough staff support, and he was forced to work with a "jerry-rigged command structure, in which there was no one American official, civilian or military, on the ground in Iraq in charge of the overall American effort."

This left U.S. division commanders essentially on their own. Some rose to the challenge. One of the most successful was Maj. Gen. David Petraeus, a Princeton Ph.D. who, as commander of the 101st Airborne Division in 2003-04, worked on winning "hearts and minds" while using force in carefully calibrated increments. The success of the 101st in an area of northern Iraq with lots of ethnic tensions—or the similar success of Col. H.R. McMaster's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in the Sunni city of Tal Afar in 2005-06—contradicts the argument, popular in conservative circles, that more troops could not have helped defeat the insurgency because U.S. forces inevitably create more problems than they solve.

This was certainly true of some U.S. units, but not of others. It was all a matter of leadership. The problem is that, in too many cases, there was a leadership vacuum that extended from Washington to Iraq.

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Ricks suggests that the worst offender was the 4th Infantry Division under Maj. Gen. Ray Odierno (now a three-star assistant to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs). "Odierno's brigades and battalions earned a reputation for being overly aggressive," Ricks writes. He quotes one "senior officer": "They are going through neighborhoods, knocking on doors at two in the morning without actionable intelligence. That's how you create new insurgents."

Fiasco argues that one of the worst consequences of the 4th Infantry's misplaced aggression was that it swamped the military justice system with thousands of detainees, "the majority of them bystanders caught up in the sweeps." This created the conditions—with a small number of MPs and interrogators overwhelmed by vast numbers of prisoners—that led to the Abu Ghraib scandal.

Ricks details numerous instances of abuse that extended beyond Abu Ghraib, writing that in some units it became "routine and acceptable to beat prisoners." *Fiasco* is harsh in its assessment of such misconduct, and rightly so, because excessive brutality undermines the effectiveness of the American counterinsurgency strategy.

On occasion, however, Ricks may hold U.S. troops to an impossibly high standard. He quotes from counterinsurgency texts that counsel cultivating friendly relations with civilians and keeping firepower to a minimum. Many U.S. troops in Iraq did violate these injunctions—but so have most troops engaged in counterinsurgency throughout history, whether British, French, Russian, or Algerian. The lapses committed by American troops, while inexcusable, were relatively mild by the standards of most previous guerrilla wars.

A similar lack of historical perspective more broadly mars what is otherwise an incisive chronicle—and may account for the overly angry tone of some of Ricks's writing. If one steps back and takes the long view, it becomes apparent that it is too soon to write off the entire Iraq war as a "fiasco." Difficult as the situation is today, with Iraq seemingly sliding into civil war, defeat is not foreordained; somehow (although it is admittedly getting-harder and harder to see how), a functioning democracy may still emerge from the current mess.

Granted, there have been individual "fiascos" aplenty, but then there has been no shortage of fiascos in all previous U.S. wars, stretching back to the loss of Charlestown, Philadelphia, and New York in the War of Independence. Even our most successful wars have been marred by numerous mishaps—in World War II, think of Pearl Harbor, the loss of the Philippines, Kasserine Pass, Anzio, Operation Market Garden, and the Battle of the Bulge—most of them far more costly than the Iraq war. That doesn't mean that these conflicts weren't worth fighting, any more than the Iraq war wasn't worth fighting.

Those who know this best are the men and women in uniform. By quoting numerous current and retired officers such as Tony Zinni, who opposed the invasion of Iraq, Ricks sometimes gives the impression that the military as a whole hates the war and the Bush administration. As he knows perfectly well, that's not the case. Opinion surveys indicate that soldiers are considerably more supportive of the war effort and of its architects than the American public as a whole. (The last *Military Times* poll of service members, published this past January, found 56 percent in support of the invasion of Iraq and only 26 percent opposed. By similar percentages, the respondents approved of Bush's handling of the war.) And soldiers are voting with their feet by reenlisting in large numbers.

Few veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom would write off their service as a "fiasco." But many, perhaps most, would nod along with Ricks when he laments that their "noble sacrifices" were "undercut by the lack of thoughtful leadership at the top." ♦

Miss Davis's Life

Fasten your seat belts, it was a bumpy ride.

BY RACHEL DICARLO

There are two ways to assess Bette Davis's legacy. The easiest involves comparing her with today's A-list actresses. Try to imagine Julia Roberts or Nicole Kidman pulling off the famous smirk that conveyed both pleasure and disgust, usually accompanied by flashing eyes seen through a cloud of cigarette smoke. Or picture Lindsay Lohan playing the Southern belle Julie in *Jezebel*, or the vulgar cockney waitress Mildred in *Of Human Bondage*, and winning two Academy Awards—all by the age of 30.

The Girl Who Walked Home Alone
Bette Davis, A Personal Biography
by Charlotte Chandler
Simon & Schuster, 368 pp., $25

The better way to make the case for Davis's legacy is to stack her up against her peers who emerged from the Hollywood studio system. She didn't have the astonishing beauty of other iconic actresses of the time like Ingrid Bergman, Rita Hayworth, Vivien Leigh, or Carole Lombard. As Davis's friend Joan Blondell would recall, "She had to take a lot of cracks about her looks."

She was never part of a legendary acting team, *a la* Lombard and Clark Gable; Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart; Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy. It's unlikely she could

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John Springer Collection / Corbis

Bette Davis, Spring Byington, Henry Fonda in 'Jezebel' (1938)

have worked well with a partner. Nor did she have all those "independent woman" parts of the late 1930s and 40s to herself. Hepburn, too, dazzled when she played them. Hepburn also won more Academy Awards than any actor in history (four to Davis's two).

But no one had a greater depth and range, or did more to electrify audiences, than Bette Davis, who, over the course of a 59-year career, smoked, sashayed, seduced, and schemed her way through more than 100 films.

Her trajectory was far from standard. She began in Hollywood playing the plain sister and soon graduated to the passionate, Type-A ingénue. Her star continued to rise in the roles she got as the scorned and bitchy middle-aged diva who has been imitated by drag queens for half-a-century. And in later films she was a smash playing deranged hags and maniacs. As Leonard Maltin has written, "By the time she died Bette Davis had won a status enjoyed by no other Hollywood actress."

In *The Girl Who Walked Home Alone*, Charlotte Chandler, whom Davis contacted in 1980 after reading her biography of Groucho Marx, tells the story of Davis's legacy once again. This time Davis herself relates much of the narrative—"to set the record straight"—through a series of interviews with the author before she died.

Bette Davis grew up in Massachusetts, the descendant (she claimed) of a Salem witch. Even her entrance into the world was dramatic: "A bolt of lightning hit a tree in front of the house the moment I was born." Her father, a Harvard Law School graduate, spent much of his time away from home. The family suspected he had a mistress. Unhappy with her marriage, Bette's mother Ruthie briefly checked herself into a sanatorium, but quickly bucked up and threw herself into photography as a therapeutic hobby.

When Bette was seven, her father left the family for good, which put her on course to set up her relationships with men so they'd always disappoint her. Ruthie supported Bette and her younger sister Bobby with money she earned from photography and cleaning houses.

Bette found her inspiration to be an actress after seeing the plain-looking Peg Entwistle—most famous for leaping to her death from atop the 50-foot "H" in the famous Hollywood sign—star in a stage production of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*. "Before that performance I *wanted* to be an actress. When it ended I *had* to be an actress," she said. Ruthie wrote to Bette's father to tell him Bette wanted to be an actress. He responded by saying that she would be a more successful secretary.

When Bette got out of finishing school—her mother paid the tuition by photographing the graduates—she drove to New York to enroll in theater school. Ruthie couldn't afford tuition, but talked the prestigious John Murray Anderson School of Theater into accepting her daughter anyway. (A classmate, Lucille Ball, was sent home for being too shy.)

In drama school, she learned to wring the thick New England accent from her voice and enunciate: "The first day in class I was given a sentence to read: 'Parker parked the car in Harvard Square.' The class would still be laughing if the bell hadn't rung," she remembered. Bette also learned how to sit, walk, and fall down a flight of stairs without hurting herself—a skill she believes launched her career.

One of her first big breaks came when the not-yet-famous director George Cukor cast her in a tiny part in a play called *Broadway*. When the lead had an accident, Bette, who had been encouraged by Ruthie to learn the lead's lines, stepped in. Cukor didn't know her name, but said he'd take her

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as long as she could fall down a flight of stairs without breaking her neck. She got rave reviews, but was fired two months later.

She next did a Broadway play—during which time she and her mother barely managed to scrape by—and in 1930 landed a short contract with Universal Pictures for $300 a week. There they tried to convince her to change her name to Bettina Dawes. (Bette refused, saying she wouldn't go through life with a name that sounded like "between the drawers.")

Her film performances failed to impress the studio heads. She overheard one executive complain that she had "about as much sex appeal as [gawky silent movie actor] Slim Summerville." At the end of her contract, they dropped the actress they dubbed "the little brown wren." As she was packing her things to leave town, George Arliss called and insisted she be his leading lady in *The Man Who Played God*. Later she accepted a contract with Warner Brothers, where she made many of the best films of her career, but brawled endlessly with studio head Jack Warner.

She received dozens of Academy Award write-in votes in 1934 for *Of Human Bondage* and won the following year for *Dangerous*. She then starred in a series of mostly forgettable films; being a contract player meant she had to play any part a director assigned her. In 1936, unhappy with her roles, she staged a one-woman strike and went to England to work. There was a famous court case in England for breach of contract; the studio paid her damages, and Bette went back to work. The only role she wanted that she didn't get was *Gone With the Wind*'s Scarlett O'Hara.

In the celebrated film year of 1939, she made her favorite film, *Dark Victory*, with Humphrey Bogart and Ronald Reagan, in which she played a dying socialite. She was on the longest hot streak of her life, and got an Academy Award nomination every year from 1938 to 1943. Yet, while her career sparkled, her personal life had begun to unravel. In 1938, she divorced her first husband, her second husband died in 1943, and she began a series of affairs with director William Wyler, Howard Hughes, George Brent, and many others.

Indeed, everyone Chandler interviews agrees that Davis's favorite topic of discussion was men. "I never met a woman who loved men more than Bette did," Blondell told her, and Davis litters her stories with musings about the men she loved ("[Laurence] Olivier was my dream man") and slept with in Hollywood. She married again, gave birth to a daughter, divorced her third husband and then married her *All About Eve* costar, Gary Merrill. When that marriage fell apart, she announced that she'd only "marry again if I found a man who had $15 million, would sign over half to me, and guarantee that he'd be dead within a year."

She sought relationships with dominant men, but consistently went for the ones she could dominate and humiliate. "I confused muscle with strength," she tells Chandler. "I was a four-time loser. . . . In many respects my husbands were the same men."

In 1962, following a decade of misses, her performance as the crazy sister of a former movie star in *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?* boosted her career. And her on-set feud with costar and longtime rival Joan Crawford provided much fodder for the press. "Miss Crawford wanted to look as nice as she could," Davis explained to Chandler of the hag makeup required for the two leads. "I wanted to look as terrible as I could. Miss Crawford was a glamour-puss. I was an actress."

Davis believed she could "mop the linoleum" with Crawford, and told a reporter, "Why am I so good at playing bitches? I think it's because I'm not a bitch. Maybe that's why Miss Crawford always plays ladies." She also let it be known she believed Crawford had "slept with every male star at MGM except Lassie."

From most accounts, it seems Davis could be a terror to work with, but for whatever reason, picked people she would treat well. Robert Aldrich, the *Baby Jane* director, said she was "a real lady and not only a professional, but a very honorable person." Debbie Reynolds and Geraldine Fitzgerald adored working with her. But Douglas Fairbanks Jr. described her as "not lovable," and Lillian Gish, who worked with her in *The Whales of August* (1987), told Chandler that "I can't imagine why Bette Davis seemed to dislike me and made our scenes difficult, even beyond normal scene-stealing techniques. Worse yet she was hostile. We had no personal rapport at all."

Davis had her own take: "They said I was a monster, but if I became a monster it's because I was in a monstrous business."

In the early 1980s illness sidelined Davis after she had a stroke, and then a mastectomy. She had no idea that during this time her daughter, whom she had described to Chandler as "the person in the whole world I know I can trust," was at work on a *Mommie Dearest*-style memoir. In *My Mother's Keeper*, B.D. Hyman portrays her mother as an overbearing tyrant, who imposed her own ambition on her, showered her with presents to buy her love, and used her as a traveling companion. The daughter offered reconciliation, but only on her own terms, which involved Bette finding religion. The book devastated Bette and she disinherited her daughter and her two grandsons. They never spoke again. When Bette's own memoir came out, it included a nasty letter to her daughter and several negative reviews of *My Mother's Keeper.*

She held out hope almost until the end for another *All About Eve*, which had revived her career in 1950 when she thought it was over at age 42. She died in France in 1989.

Chandler shows that Bette Davis had meditated long and well on her life. But some of the passages could easily have been excised: "Yes, I dearly love potatoes. Still do. I even love potato skins. Yummm. If all other foods disappeared and they left me only potatoes I could live forever. French fries are the ones I like least." And so on. Or: "Do you want to know the secret of my success? Easy. Brown mascara." But it's clear that she really knew the real secret of her success: irrepressibility, and nonstop work. For Bette Davis, nothing else mattered. ♦

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In Good Hands

America and the world under Eisenhower and Dulles.

BY ALVIN S. FELZENBERG

Not long ago, at an academic institution named for the man who succeeded Dwight D. Eisenhower as president, a student paid me a visit. He wanted to know why it was that, of all the men who served in the nation's highest office in the past 70 years, Eisenhower received the least mention among students, scholars, and political pundits.

I told him that, because Ike ran the country with a steady hand in an era that John F. Kennedy termed a "hard and bitter peace," and comported himself in a manner devoid of theatrics, his presidency, unlike his service as Supreme Commander of Operation Overlord during World War II, did not readily lend itself to dramatization. I recalled that when I proposed writing my undergraduate thesis on Eisenhower, I encountered difficulty finding someone willing to supervise it. "Eisenhower was so boring," one professor said. "Why don't you write about Truman or Johnson? Then we might have something going."

I struggled to remind her that she had missed the point. For of all the postwar presidents up to that time (Harry Truman to Richard Nixon), Ike stood out in one crucial respect: He calmed, even soothed, a nation that had had enough excitement inflicted upon it by presumably more "interesting" partisan scrappers (Truman, Douglas MacArthur, and Joseph McCarthy among them). He had also stayed clear of the kind of divisive foreign adventure that, while I was writing, would destroy Lyndon Johnson's presidency. It would take another decade for historians, able to ramble through Ike's papers, to be reminded just how hard that was to do and how he managed to do it.

The Truth Is Our Weapon
The Rhetorical Diplomacy of Dwight D. Eisenhower and John Foster Dulles
by Chris Tudda
LSU, 224 pp., $39.95

Of all the presidents who served after Franklin Roosevelt and before Ronald Reagan, Truman and Eisenhower may have been the only two who sought the office not as a means of "proving" something. And Truman had the office thrust upon him. Ike, contrary to all those myths about a "draft," sought the job in order to *do* something. He wanted nothing less than to put into place the wherewithal that would enable the United States to prevail in what appeared to be a decades-long struggle against a determined, ideologically driven enemy known to exhibit a certain ruthlessness. If any of this sounds remarkably contemporary, keep on reading.

My student departed before I thought to remind him that there is one camp on the political spectrum that has taken Ike in—some might say even hijacked him. That is the Loony Left. Ike's picture became the logo for *Why We Fight*, Eugene Jarecki's filmed political diatribe that passes itself off as a "documentary." It begins with Eisenhower's warning, in his farewell address, of the dangers of the "military-industrial" complex, and before long, proclaims most American military engagements in parts of the world as efforts to justify massive expenditures on advanced weaponry. (Oh yes, it also mentions oil.)

That the left would present Ike as an unheeded prophet would startle liberals of his era. In *Good Morning, Vietnam*, Robin Williams captured the prevailing Hollywood view of America's first golfer when he mimicked Ike and likened him to Elmer Fudd. "What would happen if Eisenhower died and Nixon became president?" ran one 1950s joke. "What would happen if Dulles died and Eisenhower became president?" went the rejoinder.

Readers of *The Truth Is Our Weapon* will encounter on its pages neither the "do-nothing" Eisenhower that academics of yesteryear invented nor the gifted statesman/politician contemporary historians now see, nor Jarecki's scorned prophet, but (hold on to your armchairs) a man who, through his rhetoric, provoked the Soviet Union and American allies, making war *more* rather than *less* likely.

Parting company with both the jokesters who saw Ike as putty in the hands of a scheming Dulles, and the revisionists who had Ike manipulating Dulles and others with a "hidden hand," Chris Tudda sees the president and his secretary of state as equal partners. Though he might protest that he does not fully share the churlish opinion of Harold Macmillan, that Ike was "very naive and inexperienced" and Dulles was "ignorant and stupid," he sets up his arguments in ways that would have readers not that familiar with this duo draw no other conclusion.

Tudda's basic thesis is that, through their deliberate use of "inflammatory" rhetoric, in both public and private, Eisenhower and Dulles on more than one occasion undermined their own policies of moderation, containment, and peaceful coexistence by first bewildering and, eventually, emboldening the Soviets and antagonizing allies. He takes as his focus of inquiry three cases, all involving Europe. These were Eisenhower's advocacy of a "New Look" military posture, with West Germany and its neighbors fully integrated into one military force, the European Defense Community; a "rollback" of Soviet territory (Tudda cannot bring himself to call it an

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"empire"); and the incorporation of a unified Germany into the Western alliance.

That the first of these goals was implemented by Eisenhower himself, the second by Ronald Reagan, and the third by George H.W. Bush, Tudda ignores. Would Reagan and Bush have been able to succeed had Eisenhower announced, as Tudda might have had him do, that it was American policy to accept the permanent division of Germany and Soviet domination of Eastern Europe? The closest the United States and the Soviet Union came to a nuclear exchange occurred, not during Eisenhower's tenure in office, but during Kennedy's. Historians attribute the origins of the Cuban missile crisis to Nikita Khrushchev's conclusion, after meeting him in Vienna, that Kennedy was "weak." Whatever his faults, no one ever thought that about Dwight D. Eisenhower, or felt a need to "test" his resolve.

With the luxury of hindsight, Dulles seems to have been anything but "ignorant and stupid" when he recognized the need for the United States to "keep alive the spirit of liberty in these [captive] people." Tudda finds it odd that the Eisenhower administration never publicly acknowledged that the CIA had determined that "Soviet control over the satellites is virtually complete and unlikely to diminish or be successfully challenged from within." How fortunate for the people of Eastern Europe that there were some in the West who refused to believe that the conditions they endured would be permanent. One was the "naive and inexperienced" president of the United States.

Tudda, a State Department historian, finds it provocative that Eisenhower would tell the Czechs that "America remains true to its great traditions and firm in its conviction that tyranny cannot long endure in a world where free men are strong, united, and resolute," and the Poles that "a people . . . who have once known freedom cannot be for always deprived of their national independence, or of their personal liberty."

None of this is to suggest that, in the three cases Tudda examines, Eisenhower walked away a glowing success. The failures he endured may have resulted from more than his choice of rhetoric. In the case of the "New Look," Eisenhower's goal was to defend Europe more through nuclear weapons than the more costly long-term commitment of troops. When the French balked at an integrated military, Ike and Dulles threatened, to no avail, to reduce the level of America's commitment to Europe's defense. (With the allies the use of "brinkmanship," another word missing in Tudda's text, did not work.) As Tudda suggests, Ike and Dulles may have had no alternatives; the problem may have been the policy, not the rhetoric. With World War II over only nine years, it was not surprising that the French would fear the Germans more than they did the Soviets.

Bettman / Corbis

Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, 1955

When discussing the uprisings in Eastern Europe, and especially in Hungary, Tudda concedes that neither Eisenhower nor Dulles promised to intervene in order to assure the success of these independence movements. That, all sides knew, would have assured war. Yet Western diplomats and Radio Free Europe made statements that were ambiguous enough to allow listeners to conclude otherwise.

In discussing these two cases, Tudda demonstrates that Eisenhower's "multiple advisory" executive system, and military "staff-like" operation, which placed a premium on moving orders and information down the line, broke down on more than one occasion. Ike's secretaries of defense and treasury, Tudda says, were not among the first to know that the president had postponed his much-trumpeted defense cuts. Eisenhower, we learn, was "amazed" to discover that U.N. ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge was unaware that it was not American policy to incite revolution.

A reading of Tudda's chapter on German unification suggests that, however clumsy Eisenhower and Dulles may have been as negotiators, the stalemate they achieved was a partial victory, in that they thwarted Soviet aspirations even if they could not advance their own. Germany remained divided, but the United States did not publicly relinquish hope that it would one day become whole again and part of the Western alliance. Eisenhower and Dulles also pushed back against pressures to unify Germany as a neutral state, on the Austrian model. By "holding the line," Ike made it possible for Reagan and Bush 41 to advance decades later.

Of most interest to policymakers are the early chapters in which Tudda treats the origins of Dulles's ideology and the instruments Eisenhower used to further it. Although he had supported all the instruments Truman enacted

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(with Republican help) to contain Soviet aggression—the Marshall Plan, aid to Greece and Turkey, NATO, the reorganization of intelligence-gathering and military operations—Dulles came to believe that, under containment, the Soviets had been able to use "ideas" as "missiles" while the United States adopted a passive pose. He wanted us to engage vigorously in the ongoing war of ideas.

In the aftermath of 9/11, much has been said about the need to "win hearts and minds" in the Muslim world. The 9/11 Commission, the secretary of defense, and others have recognized that, if the West is to prevail against a determined enemy, with firmly held beliefs and the determination to impose them through extraordinary and violent means, the West must find a way to dry up the supply of would-be terrorists. That means telling America's story as many ways as is humanly and technically possible. And doing that will require rebuilding the house that Ike helped build and that presidents in the aftermath of the Cold War allowed to atrophy.

In the late 1940s, the man who presided over the invasion of Normandy complained to Congress about an "appalling ignorance throughout the world about the United States." He called for a national program to get the facts to the people of the world by means of massive educational and cultural exchanges and a civic education component in schools that taught the principles of both democracy and communism. A year after the Soviets launched Sputnik (another phenomenon unmentioned in this book), Eisenhower signed into law the National Defense Education Act, which provided a free college education to students entering certain fields, such as the hard sciences. It also provided for the training of translators and linguists in languages not then widely taught in the schools.

Ike called on educational organizations, businesses, and labor unions to join in partnership with the federal government in telling America's story to the world. After leaving office, he helped found Sister Cities, an organization committed to linking American cities and towns with foreign counterparts so that differing cultures got to know one another through the steady exchange of people from all walks of life. He urged schoolchildren who visited him at Gettysburg to become "pen pals" with children their age in other countries.

With the fifth anniversary of 9/11 fast approaching, how close have we come to equaling the effort Ike made a half-century ago? Whatever mistakes he may have made, and however his critics, past and present, belittle him, it is Ike's vision that prevailed, not Khrushchev's. Because he put into practice a series of institutions, organizations, and networks that told America's story effectively, the United States was able to win the last war of ideas—seven presidents later. If the current White House follows Ike's lead, George W. Bush may be able to claim a similar legacy. ♦

Wild, Wonderful

Finding happiness two hours west of Washington.

BY RONALD RADOSH

Shepherdstown, West Virginia

What is a quintessential third-generation New York Jewish intellectual—me—doing moving to a house located between Shepherdstown and Martinsburg, West Virginia?

When I left 93rd Street and Broadway in 1992 for the Maryland suburbs of Washington, my New York friends thought my wife and I were mad. One does not simply discard one's roots and leave the Big Apple; it is just not done! Now, my Washington friends are shocked ("You're going *where?*"). How could we leave the center of the nation's political life for an area way past the boondocks, far beyond commuting distance?

Actually, as we've learned, hundreds of people commute from here daily to Washington: The towns are on the MARC line. Truthfully, if I had to be in the District every day, I would find it difficult. The last train leaves at 8 A.M. and gets in at 10. Most people get up at 6 and catch the 7 o'clock. But my wife and I are now writing books full time. We benefited from the real estate appreciation of the past few years and, not having a child at home needing good schools, we can live anywhere. Shepherdstown is close enough to come into Washington and visit friends and attend events (slightly over an hour's drive).

The only serious problem I have is getting used to reading the daily papers online—unless I want to make the drive each day into town to buy them. There's no market for delivery of the major national papers out here, only the *Martinsburg Journal*. Thank God (or Al Gore) for the Internet and broadband; without it, I would have had to stay put.

We love our new home and area. And we knew the area had a lot that attracts us. The mountain air is fresh and the views are breathtaking. Our home is adjacent to a golf course; if I actually played golf, I'd be in heaven. But the area is rich in cultural life. As the brochure for the popular Contemporary American Theater Festival held each July puts it, the plays take place in "hip,

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Ronald Radosh

'Tuesday is the regular open mike night.'

historic Shepherdstown." As I write, we are planning an evening drive to town for the Chinese film *Balzac and the Little Seamstress*, one of the movies showing at the East-West Film Festival held at the circa 1800s Opera House sponsored by the Shepherdstown Film Society. How many small towns—this one being the oldest town in West Virginia—have their own film society?

Then there is the music. As a lover of old-time bluegrass and traditional folk music, and as a very amateur guitar and banjo picker, I knew that I was settling in the heart of music country. If I wanted to, I could go and listen and play almost every night. Tuesday is the regular open mike night at the Mecklenburg Inn, once an inn and guest house dating from 1796. Performers start at 8 P.M. and the music goes on till past midnight, or when the bartender decides to close up. On Wednesday there's the old-time and bluegrass jam session, where talented fiddle, mandolin, washtub bass players, and banjo and guitar pickers come and play. And when I get my courage up, I join them.

On Thursday, the action passes to O'Hurley's General Store—a place that looks like what an old general store must have been like, and sells a grab-bag of items from toys to clothing to CDs. One side was built by its owner to house the free Thursday-night performances from area musicians, and the folding chairs and couches quickly fill up as people come to listen to skilled semiprofessionals perform traditional Irish music and some bluegrass and folk.

There are scores of local festivals. Memorial Day weekend hosts the Martinsburg Wine and Arts Festival with top-notch bluegrass and folk performers and crafts and wine tastings from local vineyards. In June and September are the Mountain Heritage Arts and Crafts Festivals in nearby Harpers Ferry.

The center of town is an original building that is still part of Shepherd College, now University. The institution is home to the Byrd Center for Legislative History, run by a former historian of Congress, Ray Smock, now one of my neighbors. The college also runs discussions and forums. Recently the Men's Club (yes, there also is a Women's Club, and the new president of the Men's Club is actually a woman) held a forum on China and American foreign policy, led by a professor of Asian studies.

Ah, but what about good restaurants? Okay, I have to admit it, the Chinese food isn't as good as it is in the Washington area. But the cuisine at Shepherdstown's Yellow Brick Bank Restaurant is as good as anything I've had in the finest food emporiums in the nation's capital. And the Thai-Japanese place on West German Street (the main street) stands up to the best of them. My guests can stay at the four-diamond Bavarian Inn, where they eat continental and German cuisine and room in luxurious accommodations. No wonder one friend told me, "Oh, you're in Yuppie West Virginia."

At the end of a full day on the town, I drive up Old Shepherdstown Road to the turnoff for the local roads back home—over the railroad tracks and a one-lane bridge, past streets named Ma and Pa Road, Good Folks Road, and Salvation Lane, and slip John Denver into my CD player, singing the words that now apply to our new life:

Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain momma,
Take me home, country roads ♦

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Dispirited

Even ghosts can't revive this one from the dead.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The plot of Woody Allen's new comedy, *Scoop*, is set in motion when a reporter is given the story of the century. Unfortunately for him, the reporter gets the hot tip after his death, while he is riding on the ferryboat to Hades. Allen's movies have always been full of otherworldly flourishes. He has shown us ghosts before, in *Love and Death* and *A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy*. He has turned socialites invisible (*Alice*). He has placed an overbearing mother in the sky over Manhattan to follow her son around (the "Oedipus Wrecks" section of *New York Stories*). He has introduced a New Jersey girl to a fictional motion-picture hero who steps off the big screen (*The Purple Rose of Cairo*).

Scoop
Directed by Woody Allen

And yet, with the exception of *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, Allen makes no effort to ensure that the magical events in his movies seem or feel even remotely magical. The image of the ghost appearing and disappearing in *Scoop* wouldn't have impressed a farmer watching his first two-reeler on a Nickelodeon in 1913. What's more, his characters either barely react when the supernatural invades their lives, or they respond with grumpy peevishness.

In *Scoop*, the ghost manifests himself before a would-be young journalist in London played by Scarlett Johansson and tells her that a prominent man-about-town is a serial killer. She is shocked by that news, but seems hardly intrigued by the fact that she has communed with the spirit world. That goes double for the magician on whose stage she has met the ghost. The magician, played by Allen, is standing right there when the ghost appears for the second time, and ten minutes later he's whining that he's tired and would rather be eating lunch.

Scoop has a diverting premise out of a Bob Hope movie from half a century ago—the 20-year-old daughter of a Brooklyn dental hygienist and a peevish old prestidigitator posing as father and daughter to solve a crime—but like most of Allen's slapdash comic work in the past two decades, it's the cinematic equivalent of an egg so hastily cooked it doesn't even come out soft-boiled. It's as though Allen gets a funny idea, spends a few weeks jotting it down on yellow legal pads, gets his sister to raise $15 million from Europeans, hires a very good cast hopeful that he might write one of them a part that will secure an Oscar (or at least a nomination), and then goes off and spends 10 weeks making it—without actually bothering to put his work through a second draft.

Allen does try something new by setting up a loving-bickering dynamic between his character and Johansson's in which she calls him an idiot while he tells people she has learning disabilities. I gather this is based on the real-life banter between Allen and Johansson, who served him so well as the desperate girlfriend in last year's surprisingly good melodrama, *Match Point*. But satisfying though it might be to see a young female character in an Allen movie treat Allen himself with disgust rather than adoration, it's never in the least amusing. Nor is Allen's groaningly old bit as a hapless American who tries to get in with the British upper class by talking stupidly about tea, crumpets, and fox hunts.

The more interesting question raised by the entirely forgettable *Scoop* is this: Why does Allen bother with the supernatural if he is not going to place it at the center of his tale—or if he isn't trying to make a point about how there is more to heaven and earth than is dreamt of in our philosophy? Allen is, by his own admission, a skeptic, an atheist, even a nihilist. In his movies, the universe is a directionless place. Killers tend to get away with their murders. Adulterers end their affairs without consequence and go back to their wives if they so choose. Love fades. Whether a life is tragic or comic simply depends on how you look at it.

It doesn't take a therapist to see Allen's bleak worldview is simply a means for him to excuse his own appalling behavior—taking pornographic pictures and engaging in sexual relations with the teenage daughter of his girlfriend, the same girl who was sister to his own two children. Nor does it take a therapist to see that his longing for magic and the supernatural represents a desperate desire to find something, anything, transcendent to believe in—in his case, the cheapest, easiest, and least meaningful form of transcendence there is. ♦

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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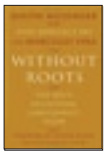
"Celebrizines?"

Books in Brief



***Without Roots* by Joseph Ratzinger and Marcello Pera (Basic Books, 159 pp., $22.00).** In a Socratic exchange of letters, the then-Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and Italian senate president Marcello Pera propose that Europeans are loitering through history without a compass. Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, notes that secular relativism discourages Europeans from deeming their political traditions to be superior to, say, *sharia* law. Western traditions of freedom and faith can only be sustained, he suggests, with the help of "creative minorities," who might serve as wardens of the virtues of the West. Think of the Israelites who had a profound impact on the Gentiles around them, or the monks who kept intellectual culture alive in medieval monasteries (prime among them St. Benedict with his famous *Rule*, which provided practical and spiritual precepts to foster contemplative, communal life). Ratzinger is not clear as to who might fulfill this role, or how they might do it, but the papal name he chose for himself may provide a clue: The philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre concluded his 1980 work *After Virtue* with a call for a new St. Benedict, one to initiate a revamped monasticism that could hold together a coherent conception of civilization in a culture that falls into absurdity by forgetting the values upon which its free, stable society was sustained.

European views of President Bush and the Iraq war expose the continent's self-flagellating spirit. Ratzinger, admitting the limits of his field, says that as a theologian he can offer no insights as to the merits of the war, which is the task of statesmen. But he rejects "a pacifism . . . that assigns the same value to everything." Pera praises Bush's "armed position" over the "angelic relativism" of European intellectuals who believe that the world is on the cusp of perpetual peace and who think that mankind has transcended the realities and burdens of humanity, such as the unfortunate necessity of war.

In the face of this, Christianity needs to worry less about quibbling over details, Ratzinger writes. Instead, it is time to focus on basic questions of civilization, such as the nature of revelation in relation to the modern world. He recognizes that living in this world requires prudence. In a passage that may surprise some who confuse politics with religion, Ratzinger, uncompromising in matters of faith, writes that politics involves "what is doable. . . . Politics is the art of the compromise."

Those "creative minorities" should ask: "How far can the Christian politician push, through compromises, in favor of a law that is morally grounded without entering into contradiction with his or her conscience?" Certainly, this is difficult—and if Aristotle was right, the answer will not embody mathematical precision. But no answer can be achieved if the roots of the debate are not fleshed out, and no answer will be of use to Western civilization without some steadfast statesmen who are willing to take up the responsibility of defending those roots—which may involve resorting to arms. That a pontiff and a leading Italian statesmen would jointly offer such sentiments may be a beneficial, if tardy, step in attacking Europe's sordid flirtation with politically correct platitudes.

—Joseph Lindsley

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Parody

Former CIA employee Valerie Plame and her husband, Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV, yesterday filed a lawsuit accusing Vice President Dick Cheney, his former chief of staff I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and presidential adviser Karl Rove of violating their rights by leaking her name and CIA role to reporters.

—News item, July 14, 2006

November 7, 2006

■ CABLE'S VH1 ANNOUNCED that the cast of Team A for the winter season of *Celebrity Fit Club* will include comedian/actor Jim Belushi of *According to Jim* (ABC), former Baltimore Orioles first baseman Boog Powell, actress/comedienne Kathy Kinney, formerly of *The Drew Carey Show*, and Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV.

* * *

■ Spanish-language broadcasts

February 25, 2007

TV THIS WEEK, *Continued*

9:00 Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV and his wife, former CIA agent Valerie Plame, make guest appearances on ***The King of Queens*** (CBS) this week as a mysterious, affluent couple who the Heffernans think might be spies on assignment to the United Nations.

Gary Coleman revisits his action

August 12, 2007

while sharing a Los Angeles jail cell with fallen pop icon **Michael Jackson.**

• • •

Former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV today appeared shirtless at a press conference at the Dorchester Hotel in London, sponsored by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, holding a sign that said "I'd Rather Negotiate Naked Than Wear Fur."

• • •

Long Island's own Joey Buttafuoco pleaded guilty to a charge of resisting

January 3, 2008

WILSON SPEAKS: *The Disney Company announced today in Los Angeles that former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV will be the voice of Wheezy the Penguin in its forthcoming animated production of* Toy Story 3.

HO, HO, HO: *Former*

May 25, 2008

SCHOOL NOTES

This year's speaker for the graduation ceremony at Thomas A. Daschle High School in Huron, S.D., will be former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV.

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The girl's gymnasium at Umphenou will be open on Sundays for

October 12, 2008

SLEEP-TECH NEWS

MATTRESS FIRM TAPS WAGNER, FORMER AMBASSADOR FOR QVC

Select Comfort Mattress has chosen actress Lindsay Wagner and former Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV as its corporate spokespersons on the QVC shopping network.

CLINTON SLATED TO ENDORSE SLEEP-TOP HOTEL BEDDING

April 25, 2009

Wink Martindale, longtime host of *The New Tic Tac Dough*, will be paired with former **Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV** at the 13th Annual Alice Cooper Celebrity AM Golf Tournament at the Camelback Inn Resort & Spa in Scottsdale, Arizona.

One-time rocker bad girl **Sinead O'Co**

September 30, 2009

One-time ambassador

DALLAS—The Kimberly-Clark Corporation is pleased to announce that Ambassador Joseph C. Wilson IV has been named as national spokesperson for a new marketing campaign for Depends® adult incontinence products, succeeding the late June Allyson.

"No one knows more about leaks than Ambassador Wilson," said Kimberly-Clark CEO Ivor Hamlisch, "and we are delighted that someone

the weekly Standard

August 7, 2006

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